Encyclopaedia of Indian War of Independence

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Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is viewed as messiah of dalits and downtrodden in India. He was the chairman of the drafting committee that was constituted by the Constituent Assembly in 1947 to draft a constitution for the independent India. He played a seminal role in the framing of the constitution. Bhimrao Ambedkar was also the first Law Minister of India. For his yeoman service to the nation, B.R. Ambedkar was bestowed with Bharat Ratna in 1990.

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was born on April 14, 1891 in Mhow (presently in Madhya Pradesh). He was the fourteenth child of Ramji and Bhimabai Sakpal Ambedkar. B.R. Ambedkar belonged to the "untouchable" Mahar Caste. His father and grandfather served in the British Army. In those days, the government ensured that all the army personnel and their children were educated and ran special schools for this purpose. This ensured good education for Bhimrao Ambedkar, which would have otherwise been denied to him by the virtue of his caste.

Bhimrao Ambedkar experienced caste discrimination right from the childhood. After his retirement, Bhimrao's father settled in Satara Maharashtra. Bhimrao was enrolled in the local school. Here, he had to sit on the floor in one corner in the classroom and teachers would not touch his notebooks. In spite of these hardships, Bhimrao continued his studies and passed his Matriculation examination from Bombay University with flying colours in 1908. Bhimrao Ambedkar joined the Elphinstone College for further education. In 1912, he graduated in Political Science and Economics

from Bombay University and got a job in Baroda. In 1913, Bhimrao Ambedkar lost his father. In the same year Maharaja of Baroda awarded scholarship to Bhimrao Ambedkar and sent him to America for further studies. Bhimrao reached New York in July 1913. For the first time in his life, Bhimrao was not demeaned for being a Mahar. He immersed himself in the studies and attained a degree in Master of Arts and a Doctorate in Philosophy from Columbia University in 1916 for his thesis "National Dividend for India: A Historical and Analytical Study." From America, Dr. Ambedkar proceeded to London to study economics and political science. But the Baroda government terminated his scholarship and recalled him back.

The Maharaja of Baroda appointed Dr. Ambedkar as his political secretary. But no one would take orders from him because he was a Mahar. Bhimrao Ambedkar returned to Bombay in November 1917. With the help of Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, a sympathiser of the cause for the upliftment of the depressed classes, he started a fortnightly newspaper, the "Mooknayak" (Dumb Hero) on January 31, 1920. The Maharaja also convened many meetings and conferences of the "untouchables" which Bhimrao addressed. In September 1920, after accumulating sufficient funds, Ambedkar went back to London to complete his studies. He became a barrister and got a Doctorate in science.

After completing his studies in London, Ambedkar returned to India. In July 1924, he founded the Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (Outcastes Welfare Association). The aim of the Sabha was to uplift the downtrodden socially and politically and bring them to the level of the others in the Indian society. In 1927, he led the Mahad March at the Chowdar Tank at Colaba, near Bombay, to give the untouchables the right to draw water from the public tank where he burnt copies of the 'Manusmriti' publicly.

In 1929, Ambedkar made the controversial decision to cooperate with the all-British Simon Commission which was to look into setting up a responsible Indian Government in India. The Congress decided to boycott the Commission and drafted its own version of a constitution for free India. The Congress version had no provisions for the depressed classes. Ambedkar became more skeptical of the Congress's commitment to safeguard the rights of the depressed classes.

When a separate electorate was announced for the depressed classes under Ramsay McDonald 'Communal Award', Gandhiji went on a fast unto death against this decision. Leaders rushed to Dr. Ambedkar to drop his demand. On September 24, 1932, Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhiji reached an understanding, which became the famous Poona Pact. According to the pact the separate electorate demand was replaced with special concessions like reserved seats in the regional legislative assemblies and Central Council of States.

Dr. Ambedkar attended all the three Round Table Conferences in London and forcefully argued for the welfare of the "untouchables". Meanwhile, British Government decided to hold provincial elections in 1937. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar set up the "Independent Labour Party" in August 1936 to contest the elections in the Bombay province. He and many candidates of his party were elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly.

In 1937, Dr. Ambedkar introduced a Bill to abolish the "khoti" system of land tenure in the Konkan region, the serfdom of agricultural tenants and the Mahar "watan" system of working for the Government as slaves. A clause of an agrarian bill referred to the depressed classes as "Harijans," or people of God. Bhimrao was strongly opposed to this title for the untouchables. He argued that if the "untouchables" were people of God then all others would be people of monsters. He was against any such reference. But the Indian National Congress succeeded in introducing the term Harijan. Ambedkar felt bitter that they could not have any say in what they were called.

In 1947, when India became independent, the first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, invited Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, who had been elected as a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bengal, to join his Cabinet as a Law Minister. The Constituent Assembly entrusted the job of drafting the Constitution to a committee and Dr. Ambedkar was elected as Chairman of this Drafting Committee. In February 1948, Dr. Ambedkar presented the Draft Constitution before the people of India; it was adopted on November 26, 1949.

In October 1948, Dr. Ambedkar submitted the Hindu Code Bill to the Constituent Assembly in an attempt to codify the Hindu law. The Bill caused great divisions even in the Congress party. Consideration for the bill was postponed to September 1951. When the Bill was taken up it was truncated. A dejected Ambedkar relinquished his position as Law Minister. On May 24, 1956, on the occasion of Buddha Jayanti, he declared in Bombay, that he would adopt Buddhism in October. On October 14, 1956 he embraced Buddhism along with many of his followers. On December 6, 1956, Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar died peacefully in his sleep.

Overcoming numerous social and financial obstacles, Ambedkar became one of the first untouchables to obtain college education in India. He went on to pursue higher studies in the United States and England, where he earned law degrees and multiple doctorates for his studies and works in law, economics and political science. A famous scholar, Ambedkar practised law for a few years before he began publishing journals advocating political rights and social freedom for India's untouchables. Leading numerous public agitations, he would become a fierce critic of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress.

Ambedkar organised untouchable political parties and social organisations, and served in the legislative councils of British India. He would intensify his criticism of orthodox Hindu society and would oppose nationalist rebellions. Despite this, his reputation as a scholar led to his appointment as free India's first law minister, and chairman of the committee responsible to draft a constitution. Ambedkar's work would guarantee political, economic and social freedoms for untouchables and other ethnic, social and religious communities of India. His polemical condemnation of Hinduism and attacks on Islam would make him unpopular and controversial, although his conversion to Buddhism sparked a revival in interest of Buddhist philosophy in India.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born in the British-founded town and military cantonment of Mhow in the Central Provinces (now in Madhya Pradesh). He was the 14th and last child of Ramji Maloji Sakpal and Bhimabai Murbadkar. His family was of Marathi

background from the town of Ambavade in the Ratnagiri district of modern-day Maharashtra. They belonged to the Hindu Mahar caste, who were treated as untouchables and subjected to intense socioeconomic discrimination. Ambedkar's ancestors had for long been in the employ of the army of the British East India Company, and his father served in the Indian Army at the Mhow cantonment, rising to the rank of Subedar. He had received a degree of formal education in Marathi and English, and encouraged his children to learn and work hard at school.

Belonging to Kabir Panth, Ramji Sakpal encouraged his children to read the Hindu classics, especially the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. He used his position in the army to lobby for his children to study at the government school, as they faced resistance owing to their caste. Although able to attend school, Ambedkar and other Untouchable children were segregated and given no attention or assistance from the teachers. Ramji Sakpal retired in 1894 and the family moved to Satara two years later. Shortly after their move, Ambedkar's mother died. The children were cared for by their paternal aunt, and lived in difficult circumstances. Only three sons—Balaram, Anandrao and Bhimrao—and two daughters—Manjula and Tulasa—of the Ambedkars would go on to survive them. Of his brothers and sisters, only Ambedkar succeeded in passing his examinations and graduate to a bigger school. His native village name was "Ambavade" in Ratnagiri District so he changed his name from "Sakpal" to "Ambedkar" with the recommendation and faith of a Brahmin teacher that believed in Bhimrao.

Ramji Sakpal remarried in 1898, and the family moved to Mumbai (then Bombay), where Ambedkar became the first untouchable student at the Government High School near Elphinstone Road. Although excelling in his studies, Ambedkar was increasingly disturbed by his segregation and discrimination. In 1907, he passed his matriculation examination and entered the University of Mumbai, becoming one of the first persons of untouchable origin to enter college in India. This success provoked celebrations amongst his community, and after a public ceremony, he was given a biography of the Buddha by his teacher Krishnaji

Arjun Keluskar also known as Dada Keluskar a Maratha caste scholar. Ambedkar's marriage had been arranged the previous year as per Hindu custom, to Ramabai, a nine-year old girl from Dapoli. In 1908, he entered the Elphinstone College and obtained a scholarship of Rs. 25 a month from the Gaikwad ruler of Baroda, Sahyaji Rao III for higher studies in USA. By 1912, he obtained his degree in economics and political science, and prepared to take up employment with the Baroda state government. His wife gave birth to his first son, Yashwant in the same year. Ambedkar had just moved his young family and started work, when he dashed back to Mumbai to see his ailing father, who died on February 2, 1913.

A few months later, Ambedkar was selected by the Gaikwad ruler to travel to the United States and enrol at Columbia University, with a scholarship of $11.5 pounds per month. Arriving in New York City, Ambedkar was admitted for graduate studies at the political science department. After a brief stay at the dormitory, he moved to a housing club run by Indian students and took up rooms with a Parsi friend, Naval Bhathena. In 1916, he was awarded a Ph.D. for a thesis which he eventually published in book form as The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India. His first published work, however, was a paper on Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development. Winning his degree and doctorate, he travelled to London and enrolled at Gray's Inn and the London School of Economics, studying law and preparing a doctoral thesis in economics. The expiration of his scholarship the following year forced him to temporarily abandon his studies and return to India amidst World War I.

Ambedkar wrote very learned and theories obtained his M.A and Ph.D. degrees. He returned to India on the 21st of August 1917. There is one thing to note in the years of Ambedkar's education. He studied English and Persian languages in India. In America he studied Political Science, Ethics, Anthropology, Social Science and Economics. In this way he studied many subjects. He obtained his doctorate. Even at that time Ambedkar had a revolutionary mind. He had made an unshakable resolution to wipe out the injustice done to the people of the low cast; in this way he wanted to bring about a revolution in the Hindu Society.

But–and this is important before becoming a revolutionary he increased his knowledge. Because of this his thoughts were not mere froth. They had a solid foundation of information. This enabled him to pay a very effective part in framing the Constitution of India.

Returning to work as military secretary for Baroda state, Ambedkar was distressed by the sudden reappearance of discrimination in his life, and left his job to work as a private tutor and accountant, even starting his own consultancy business that failed owing to his social status. With the help of an English acquaintance, the former Bombay Governor Lord Syndenham, he won a post as professor of political economy at the Syndenham College of Commerce and Economics in Mumbai. He was able to return to England in 1920 with the support of the Maharaja of Kolhapur, his Parsi friend and his own savings. By 1923 he completed a thesis on The Problem of the Rupee. He was awarded a D.Sc. by the University of London, and finishing his law studies, he was simultaneously admitted to British Bar as a barrister. On his way back to India, Ambedkar spent three months in Germany, where he conducted further studies in economics at the University of Bonn. He would be formally awarded a Ph.D. by the Columbia University on June 8, 1927.

In 1926, he became a nominated member of the Bombay Legislative Council, and led a satyagraha — nonviolent protest and civil disobedience as pioneered by Mahatma Gandhi — Mahad to fight for the right of the untouchable community to draw water from the main water tank of the town. On January 1, 1927 Ambedkar organised a ceremony at the Koregaon Victory Memorial near Pune, which commemorated the Indian soldiers who died during World War I. Here he inscripted the names of the soldiers from his Mahar community on a marble tablet. In a Depressed Classes Conference on December 24, he condemned the ancient Hindu classical text, the Manusmriti (Laws of Manu). Condemning it for justifying the system of caste discrimination and untouchability, Ambedkar and his supporters burned copies of the texts. In 1927, he would begin his second journal, the Bahiskrit Bharat (Excluded India), later rechristened as Janata (The People). He would be appointed to the Bombay Presidency

Committee to work with the all-European Simon Commission in 1928. This commission had sparked great protests across India, and while its report was ignored by most Indians, Ambedkar himself wrote a separate set of recommendations for future constitutional reforms. He was injured in an accident that occurred during a visit to Chalisgaon on October 23, 1929. Hoping to help the untouchable community, which was facing a social boycott from orthodox Hindus, he was confined in bed there till the end of the year.

In this speech, Ambedkar criticized the Salt Satyagraha launched by Gandhi and the Congress. Ambedkar's criticisms and political work had made him very unpopular with orthodox Hindus, as well as many Congress politicians who had condemned untouchability and worked against discrimination across India. His prominence and popular support amongst the untouchable community had increased, and he was invited to attend the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931. Here he sparred verbally with Gandhi on the question of awarding separate electorates to untouchables. A fierce opponent of separate electorates on religious and sectarian lines, Gandhi feared that separate electorates for untouchables would divide Hindu society for future generations.

When the British agreed with Ambedkar and announced the awarding of separate electorates, Gandhi began a fast-unto-death while imprisoned in the Yeravada Central Jail of Pune in 1932. Exhorting orthodox Hindu society to eliminate discrimination and untouchability, Gandhi asked for the political and social unity of Hindus. Gandhi's fast provoked great public support across India, and orthodox Hindu leaders, Congress politicians and activists such as Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pawlankar Baloo organized joint meetings with Ambedkar and his supporters at Yeravada. Fearing a communal reprisal and killings of untouchables, had Gandhi died, Ambedkar agreed to drop the demand for separate electorates, under massive coercion from the supporters of Gandhi, and settled for a reservation of seats. Ambedkar was to criticise the fast of Gandhi as a gimmick to deny political rights to the untouchables and the coercion he faced to

give up the demand of separate electorates, in all his writings later.

Even from his boyhood Ambedkar had a mind of steel. Once it was raining very heavily. The boy Ambedkar said the would go to school. His friends said, "These are empty words, how can you go in this heavy rain?" In the downpour, the boy did go to school and that, too, without an umbrella! When some friends found Ramji a job at Satara, things seemed to be looking up for the family, and they moved again. Soon after, however, tragedy struck. Bhimabhai, who had been ill, died. Bhim's aunt Mira, though she herself was not in good health, took over the care of the children. Ramji read stories from the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana to his children, and sang devotional songs to them. In this way, home life was still happy for Bhim, his brothers and sisters. He never forgot the influence of his father. It taught him about the rich cultural tradition shared by all Indians.

The Shock of Prejudice

Bhim began to notice that he and his family were treated differently. At high school he had to sit in the corner of the room on a rough mat, away from the desks of the other pupils. At break-time, he was not allowed to drink water using the cups his fellow school children used. He had to hold his cupped hands out to have water poured into them by the school caretaker. Bhim did not know why he should be treated differently—what was wrong with him? Once, he and his elder brother had to travel to Goregaon, where their father worked as a cashier, to spend their summer holidays. They got off the train and waited for a long time at the station, but Ramji did not arrive to meet them. The station master seemed kind, and asked them who they were and where they were going. The boys were very well-dressed, clean, and polite. Bhim, without thinking, told him they were Mahars (a group classed as 'untouchables'). The station master was stunned—his face changed its kindly expression and he went away.

Bhim decided to hire a bullock-cart to take them to their father—this was before motor cars were used as taxis—but the

cart-men had heard that the boys were 'untouchables', and wanted nothing to do with them.

Finally, they had to agree to pay double the usual cost of the journey, plus they had to drive the cart themselves, while the driver walked beside it. He was afraid of being polluted by the boys, because they were 'untouchables'. However, the extra money persuaded him that he could have his cart 'purified' later! Throughout the journey, Bhim thought constantly about what had happened—yet he could not understand the reason for it. He and his brother were clean and neatly dressed. Yet they were supposed to pollute and make unclean everything they touched and all that touched them. How could that be possible?

Bhim never forgot this incident. As he grew up, such senseless insults made him realise that what Hindu society called 'untouchability' was stupid, cruel, and unreasonable. His sister had to cut his hair at home because the village barbers were afraid of being polluted by an 'untouchable'. If he asked her why they were 'untouchables', she could only answer—that is the way it has always been." Bhim could not be satisfied with this answer. He knew that—it has always been that way" does not mean that there is a just reason for it—or that it had to stay that way forever. It could be changed.

An Outstanding Scholar

While in school, Bhim's teacher Ambedkar, entered his last name into the school records as Ambedkar. Teacher Ambedkar and Pendse, were the only ones in the entire school who were kind and affectionate to young him. They made the few fond memories Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had of his school days. At this time in his young life, with his mother dead, and father working away from the village where Bhim went to school, he had some good fortune. His teacher, though from a 'high' caste, liked him a lot. He praised Bhim's good work and encouraged him, seeing what a bright pupil he was. He even invited Bhim to eat lunch with him—something that would have horrified most high caste Hindus. The teacher also changed Bhim's last name to Ambedkar—his own name.

When his father decided to remarry, Bhim was very upset—he still missed his mother so much. Wanting to run away to Bombay, he tried to steal his aunt's purse. When at last he managed to get hold of it, he found only one very small coin. Bhim felt so ashamed. He put the coin back and made a vow to himself to study very hard and to become independent.

Soon he was winning the highest praise and admiration from all his teachers. They urged Ramji to get the best education for his son Bhim. So Ramji moved with his family to Bombay. They all had to live in just one room, in an area where the poorest of the poor lived, but Bhim was able to go to Elphinstone High School—one of the best schools in all of India. In their one room everyone and everything was crowed together and the streets outside were very noisy. Bhim went to sleep when he got home from school. Then his father would wake him up at two o'clock in the morning! Everything was quiet then—so he could do his homework and study in peace. In the big city, where life was more modern than in the villages, Bhim found that he was still called an 'untouchable' and treated as if something made him different and bad—even at his famous school.

One day, the teacher called him up to the blackboard to do a sum. All the other boys jumped up and made a big fuss. Their lunch boxes were stacked behind the blackboard—they believed that Bhim would pollute the food! When he wanted to learn Sanskrit, the language of the Hindu holy scriptures, he was told that it was forbidden for 'untouchables' to do so. He had to study Persian instead—but he taught himself Sanskrit later in life.

Matriculation and Marriage

In due course, Bhim passed his Matriculation Exam. He had already come to the attention of some people interested in improving society. So when he passed the exam, a meeting was arranged to congratulate him—he was the first 'untouchable' from his community to pass it.

Bhim was then 17 years old. Early marriage was common in those days, so he was married to Ramabai the same year. He continued to study hard and passed the next Intermediate examination with distinction. However, Ramji found himself

unable to keep paying the school fees. Through someone interested in his progress, Bhim was recommended to the Maharaja Gaikwad of Baroda. The Maharaja granted him a monthly scholarship. With the help of this, Bhimrao ('rao' is added to names in Maharashtra as a sign of respect) passed his B.A. in 1912. Then he was given a job in the civil service—but only two weeks after starting, he had to rush home to Bombay. Ramji was very ill, and died soon afterwards. He had done all he could for his son, laying the foundations for Bhimrao's later achievements.

Studies in the USA and the UK

The Maharaja of Baroda had a scheme to send a few outstanding scholars abroad for further studies. Of course, Bhimrao was selected—but he had to sign an agreement to serve Baroda state for ten years on finishing his studies. In 1913, he went to the USA where he studied at the world-famous Columbia University, New York. The freedom and equality he experienced in America made a very strong impression on Bhimrao. It was so refreshing for him to be able to live a normal life, free from the caste prejudice of India. He could do anything he pleased—but devoted his time to studying. He studied eighteen hours a day. Visits to bookshops were his favourite entertainment!

His main subjects were Economics and Sociology. In just two years he had been awarded an M.A.—the following year he completed his Ph.D. thesis. Then he left Columbia and went to England, where he joined the London School of Economics. However, he had to leave London before completing his course because the scholarship granted by the State of Baroda expired. Bhimrao had to wait three years before he could return to London to complete his studies.

The British Museum in London has a very good library. It used to open at eight in the morning, and every day Ambedkar would be there by eight. He read till five o'clock. In London he came to know a student called Asnodkar. He belonged to a rich family. He was not interested in study. Ambedkar said to him, "Your people may have made plenty of money. But think, you have born a man, what are you going to achieve? The Goddess of Learning will not come to you whenever you want. We must get her blessings when she comes." In 1922 Ambedkar became a barrister and the nest year he came back to India.

Return to India—Nightmare in Baroda

So he was called back to India to take up a post in Baroda as agreed. He was given an excellent job in the Baroda Civil Service. Bhimrao now held a doctorate, and was being trained for a top job. Yet, he again ran into the worst features of the Hindu caste system. This was all the more painful, because for the past four years he had been abroad, living free from the label of 'untouchable.'

No one at the office where he worked would hand over files and papers to him—the servant threw them onto his desk. Nor would they give him water to drink. No respect was given to him, merely because of his caste. He had to go from hotel to hotel looking for a room, but none of them would take him in. At last he had found a place to live in a Parsi guest house, but only because he had finally decided to keep his caste secret. He lived there in very uncomfortable conditions, in a small bedroom with a tiny cold-water bathroom attached. He was totally alone there with no one to talk to. There were no electric lights or even oil lamps—so the place was completely dark at night. Bhimrao was hoping to find somewhere else to live through his civil service job, but before he could, one morning as he was leaving for work a gang of angry men carrying sticks arrived outside his room. They accused him of polluting the hotel and told him to get out by evening—or else! What could he do? He could not stay with either of the two acquaintances he had in Baroda for the same reason—his low caste. Bhimrao felt totally miserable and rejected.

BOMBAY—BEGINNING SOCIAL ACTIVITY

He had no choice. After only eleven days in his new job, he had to return to Bombay. He tried to start a small business there, advising people about investments—but it too failed once customers learned of his caste. In 1918, he became a lecturer at Sydenham College in Bombay. There, his students recognised him as a brilliant teacher and scholar. At this time he also helped to found a Marathi newspaper 'Mook Nayak' (Leader of the Dumb)

to champion the cause of the 'untouchables'. He also began to organise and attend conferences, knowing that he had to begin to proclaim and publicise the humiliations suffered by the Dalits—'the oppressed'—and fight for equal rights. His own life had taught him the necessity of the struggle for emancipation.

Completion of Education—Leader of India's Untouchables: In 1920, with the help of friends, he was able to return to London to complete his studies in Economics at LSE. He also enrolled to study as a Barrister at Gray's Inn. In 1923, Bhimrao returned to India with a Doctorate in Economics from the LSE—he was perhaps the first Indian to have a Doctorate from this world-famous institution. He had also qualified as a Barrister-at-Law. Back in India, he knew that nothing had changed. His qualifications meant nothing as far as the practice of Untouchability was concerned—it was still an obstacle to his career. However, he had received the best education anyone in the world could get, and was well equipped to be a leader of the Dalit community. He could argue with and persuade the best minds of his time on equal terms. He was an expert on the law, and could give convincing evidence before British commissions as an eloquent and gifted speaker. Bhimrao dedicated the rest of his life to his task. He became known by his increasing number of followers—those 'untouchables' he urged to awake—as Baba Saheb. Knowing the great value and importance of education, in 1924 he founded an association called Bahiskrit Hitakarini Sabha. This set up hostels, schools, and free libraries. To improve the lives of Dalits, education had to reach everyone. Opportunities had to be provided at grass roots level—because knowledge is power.

Leading Peaceful Agitation: In 1927 Baba Saheb presided over a conference at Mahad in Kolaba District. There he said:—It is time we rooted out of our minds the ideas of high and low. We can attain self-elevation only if we learn self-help and regain our self-respect." Because of his experience of the humiliation and injustice of untouchability, he knew that justice would not be granted by others. Those who suffer injustice must secure justice for themselves. The Bombay Legislature had already passed a Bill allowing everyone to use public water tanks and wells. (We have seen how Bhim was denied water at school, in his office, and at other places. Public water facilities were always denied to 'untouchables' because of the superstitious fear of 'pollution.')

Mahad Municipality had thrown open the local water tank four years earlier, but so far not one 'untouchable' had dared to drink or draw water from it. Baba Saheb led a procession from the Conference on a peaceful demonstration to the Chowdar Tank. He knelt and drank water from it. After he set this example, thousands of others felt courageous enough to follow him. They drank water from the tank and made history. For many hundreds of years, 'untouchables' had been forbidden to drink public water.

When some caste Hindus saw them drinking water, they believed the tank had been polluted and violently attacked the Conference, but Baba Saheb insisted violence would not help—he had given his word that they would agitate peacefully. Baba Saheb started a Marathi journal Bahishkrit Bharat ('The Excluded of India'). In it, he urged his people to hold a satyagraha (nonviolent agitation) to secure the right of entry to the Kala Ram Temple at Nasik, 'untouchables' had always been forbidden to enter Hindu temples. The demonstration lasted for a month. Then they were told they would be able to take part in the annual temple festival. However, at the festival they had stones thrown at them—and were not allowed to take part. Courageously, they resumed their peaceful agitation. The temple had to remain closed for about a year, as they blocked its entrance.

Round Table Conferences—Gandhi: Meanwhile, the Indian Freedom Movement had gained momentum under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1930, a Round Table Conference was held by the British Government in London to decide the future of India. Baba Saheb represented the 'untouchables'. He said there:—The Depressed Classes of India also join in the demand for replacing the British Government by a Government of the people and by the people... Our wrongs have remained as open sores and have not been righted although 150 years of British rule have rolled away. Of what good is such a Government to anybody?"

The British had done nothing to alleviate the status of the depressed classes. He declared that India must have a minimum of Dominion Status. He pressed for a separate electorate for the depressed classes.

Soon a second conference was held, which Mahatma Gandhi attended representing the Congress Party. Baba Saheb met Gandhi in Bombay before they went to London. Gandhi told him that he had read what Baba Saheb said at the first conference. Gandhi told Baba Saheb he knew him to be a real Indian patriot. At the Second Conference, Baba Saheb asked for a separate electorate for the Depressed Classes—Hinduism, "he said—has given us only insults, misery, and humiliation." A separate electorate would mean that the 'untouchables' would vote for their own candidates and be allotted their votes separate from the Hindu majority. Baba Saheb was made a hero by thousands of his followers on his return from Bombay—even though he always said that people should not idolise him. News came that separate electorates had been granted. Gandhi felt that separate electorates would separate the Harijans from the Hindus. The thought that the Hindus would be divided pained him grievously. He started a fast, saying that he would fast unto death.

The Mahatma's Fast: Gandhiji felt that separate electrorates would only separate the Harijans from the Hindus. The very thought that the Hindu would be divided pained him much. He started a fast against separate electorates. He said he would fast unto death in necessary. There was anxiety in the country because of Gandhiji's fast. Many Congress leaders went to Ambedkar to save Gandhiji. "Muslims, Christians and Sikhs have obtained the right of separate electorates. Gandhiji did not fast to oppose them. Why should Gandhiji fast to oppose Harijans getting separate electorates?" questioned Ambedkar. "If you are unwilling to give the 'untouchables' separate electorates, what other solution is there? It is essential to save Gandhiji. But just to save him I am not prepared to give up the interests of the backward classes," he declared. He said, reserve a larger number of seats for the untouchables' than the British have given; then I will give up the claim for separate electorates."

Only Baba Saheb could save Gandhi's life—by withdrawing the demand for separate electorates. At first he refused, saying it was his duty to do the best he could for his people—no matter what. Later he visited Gandhi, who was at that time in Yeravda jail. Gandhi persuaded Baba Saheb that Hinduism would change

and leave its bad practices behind. Finally Baba Saheb agreed to sign the Poona Pact with Gandhi in 1932. Instead of separate electorates, more representation was to be given to the Depressed Classes. However, it later became obvious that this did not amount to anything concrete.

In the Prime of His Life: Baba Saheb had by this time collected a library of over 50,000 books, and had a house named Rajgriha built at Dadar in north Bombay to hold it. In 1935 his beloved wife Ramabai died. The same year he was made Principal of the Government Law College, Bombay. Also in 1935 a conference of Dalits was held at Yeola. Baba Saheb told the conference:—We have not been able to secure the barest of human rights... I am born a Hindu. I couldn't help it, but I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu." This was the first time that Baba Saheb stressed the importance of conversion from Hinduism for his people—for they were only known as 'untouchables' within the fold of Hinduism. During the Second World War, Baba Saheb was appointed Labour Minister by the Viceroy. Yet he never lost contact with his roots—he never became corrupt or crooked. He said that he had been born of the poor and had lived the life of the poor, he would remain absolutely unchanged in his attitudes to his friends and to the rest of the world. The All-India Scheduled Castes Federation was formed in 1942 to gather all 'untouchables' into a united political party.

Architect of the Constitution: After the war Baba Saheb was elected to the Constituent Assembly to decide the way that India—a country of millions of people—should be ruled. How should elections take place? What are the rights of the people? How are laws to be made? Such important matters had to be decided and laws had to be made. The Constitution answers all such questions and lays down rules. When India became independent in August 1947, Baba Saheb Ambedkar became First Law Minister of Independent India. The Constituent Assembly made him chairman of the committee appointed to draft the constitution for the world's largest democracy. All his study of law, economics, and politics made him the best qualified person for this task. A study of the Constitutions of many countries, a deep knowledge of law, a knowledge of the history of India and of Indian Society—all these

were essential. In fact, he carried the whole burden alone. He alone could complete this huge task.

On July 15, 1947, the British Parliament passed the act of Indian Independence and on August 15, 1947, India became free. The Constituent Assemble of Independent India appointed a Drafting Committee with Dr. Ambedkar as its Chairman to draft the Constitution of India. Dr. Ambedkar was also invited to join the Cabinet as the Minister of Law. Ambedkar toiled over the Constitution while he took care of his ministry. In February 1948, Dr. Ambedkar presented the Draft Constitution before the people of India. After completing the Draft Constitution, Baba Saheb fell ill. At a nursing home in Bombay he met Dr. Sharda Kabir and married her in April 1948. On November 4, 1948 he presented the Draft Constitution to the Constituent Assembly, and on November 26, 1949 it was adopted in the name of the people of India. On that date he said: I appeal to all Indians to be a nation by discarding castes, which have brought separation in social life and created jealousy and hatred."

Later Life—Buddhist Conversion: In 1950, he went to a Buddhist conference in Sri Lanka. On his return he spoke in Bombay at the Buddhist Temple. In order to end their hardships, people should embrace Buddhism. I am going to devote the rest of my life to the revival and spread of Buddhism in India."

Why did he choose Buddhism?: Ambedkar told his friend Dattopant Thengadi: "I am in the evening of my life. There is an onslaught of ideas on our people from different countries from the four corners of the world. In this flood our people may be confused. There are strong attempts to separate the people struggling hard, from the main life-stream of this country and to attract them towards other countries. This tendency is fast growing. Even some of my colleagues who are disgusted with 'untouchability', poverty and inequality are ready to be washed away by this flood. What about the others? They should not move away from the main stream of the nation's life; and I must show them the way. At the same time, we have to make some changes in the economic and political life. That is way I have decided to follow Buddhism." There is a way of life which has come down as a steady stream in India for thousand of years. Buddhism is

not opposed to it. The backward people must rebel against the injustice done to them; they must wipe it out. But 'untouchability' is a problem of the Hindu Society. To solve this, a path which does not harm the culture and the history of Bharat must be followed. This is the basis of his resolution.

He did not believe in the theory that Aryans came from a different land and that they defeated the Dasyus' (the Dravidians) of this country. There is no foundation for this in the Vedas. The word 'Arya' appears some 33 or 34 times in the Vedas. The word has been used as an adjective meaning 'the noble' or 'the elder'. It is said in the Mahabharata that 'Dasyus' can be found in all 'varnas' (castes) and 'ashramas' (stage of life). In this way Ambedkar used to support this view. On 14th October 1956 at a big function in Nagpur, Ambedkar, with his wife, embraced Buddhism. In May 1956, on Buddha's Anniversary, Dr. Ambedkar announced that on October 14 he would embrace Buddhism. With him his wife and some three lakh followers also converted to the faith. When asked why, Dr. Ambedkar replied, "Why can't you ask this question to yourself and... your forefathers...?"

For the next five years Baba Saheb carried on a relentless fight against social evils and superstitions. On October 14, 1956 at Nagpur he embraced Buddhism. He led a huge gathering in a ceremony converting over half a million people to Buddhism. He knew that Buddhism was a true part of Indian history and that to revive it was to continue India's best tradition. 'Untouchability' is a product only of Hinduism.

Bhim was an average student. He became fond of gardening and, whenever he could, he bought saplings and with great devotion nurtured them to full growth. While studying in Satara, many of his classmates left for good jobs in Bombay. He too wanted to go to Bombay and get a job and become independent. He realized that if he ever were to be successful, he would have to concentrate more on his studies. He became interested in reading. He read not just the prescribed books in school but any book in general. His father was too pleased when he digressed from school books but he never said "no" when Bhim wanted a book.

Fight against Untouchability: As a leading Dalit scholar, Ambedkar had been invited to testify before the Southborough

Committee, which was preparing the Government of India Act 1919. At this hearing, Ambedkar argued for creating separate electorates and reservations for Dalits and different religious communities. In 1920, he began the publication of the weekly *Mooknayak* (*Leader of the Dumb*) in Mumbai. Attaining popularity, Ambedkar used this journal to criticize orthodox Hindu politicians and a perceived reticence in the Indian political community to fight caste discrimination. His speech at a Depressed Classes Conference in Kolhapur impressed the local state ruler Shahu IV, who shocked orthodox society by dining with Ambedkar and his untouchable colleagues. Ambedkar exhorted his Mahar community to abandon the idea of sub-castes, and held a joint communal dinner in which the principle of segregation was abandoned. Upon his return from Europe, Ambedkar established a successful legal practise, and also organised the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (*Group for the Wellbeing of the Excluded*) to promote education and socioeconomic upliftment of the depressed classes.

In the same vein, he was highly critical of the practice of untouchability in Indian Muslim Society, lending credence to the view that he was not exclusively against Hindus or Hinduism, but was speaking of reforming social evils. In his illustrious publication "Pakistan and the Partition of India", he writes that, while Islam speaks of "brotherhood", the practice of slavery and caste discrimination were rampant in Muslim society in South Asia, such as the Ashraf/Ajlaf caste divide and the severe discrimination against the *Arzal* castes or Dalit Muslim untouchables. With the help of Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, a sympathizer of the cause for the upliftment of the depressed classes, Bhimrao started a fortnightly newspaper, the Mooknayak (Leader of the Dumb) on January 31, 1920. The Maharaj also convened many meeting and conferences of the "untouchables" which Bhimrao addressed. Impressed by Ambedkar, the Maharaj declared at a meeting, "You have found your saviour in Ambedkar. I am confident he will break your shackles."

In July 1924, Ambedkar founded the Bahishkrut Hitkarini Sabha. The aim of the Sabha was to uplift the downtrodden socially and politically and bring them to the level of the others in the Indian society. The Sabha aimed at scrapping the caste

system from the Hindu religion. The Sabha started free school for the young and the old and ran reading rooms and libraries. Dr. Ambedkar took the grievances of the "untouchables" to court and gave them justice. Soon he became a father-figure to the poor and downtrodden and was respectfully called "Baba Saheb." On March 19-20, 1927 a conference of the depressed classes was held at Mahad. Ten thousand delegates attended, workers and leaders attended. Baba Saheb condemned the British for banning the recruitment of "untouchables" into the military. He declared: "No lasting progress can achieved unless we put ourselves through a threefold process of purification. We must improve the general tone of our demeanour, re-tone our pronunciation and revitalize our thoughts. I, therefore, ask you now to take a vow to renounce eating carrion, the... flesh of... animals, from this moment....Make an unflinching resolve not to eat the thrown away crumbs. We will attain self-elevation only if we learn self-help, regain our self respect and gain self-knowledge."

On December 25 of the same year, thousands responded to Ambedkar's call. Speaker after speaker spoke, passions rose and the vast gathering waited for the satyagraha to begin with intense anticipation. The satyagraha was deferred when the matter was referred to the court. At the end of conference, a copy of the Manusmruti, the age-old code of the Hindus that gave rise to the caste system, was ceremoniously burnt. In a thundering voice, Ambedkar demanded in its place a new smruti, devoid of all social stratification. This act sent shockwaves through the nation. On October 13, 1935, at a conference at Nasik, Dr. Ambedkar reviewed the progress made on the condition of the "untouchables" in the decade since Ambedkar started his agitation. Ambedkar declared that their efforts had not borne the kind of results he had expected. He then made a fantastic appeal to the "untouchables." He encouraged them to forsake the Hindu religion and convert to a religion where they would be treated with equality. The nation was shocked.

The British Government agreed to hold elections on the provincial level in 1937. The Congress, Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha started gearing up for the elections. Dr. Ambedkar set up the Independent Labour Party in August 1936 to contest the

elections in the Bombay province. On February 17, 1937, Ambedkar and many of his candidates won this a thumping majority. Around the same time, the Chavdar Taley water dispute which was referred to the Bombay High Court in 1927 finally handed down its verdict in favour of the depressed classes. The Constituent Assemble adopted the Draft Constitution as the Constitution of India on November 26, 1949 with all its 356 Articles and eight Schedules and Article 11 which abolished untouchability in all forms.

A Legacy Marking Indian Sociopolitical History: Ambedkar's legacy, as a sociopolitical reformer, has been long-lasting on modern India. In post independence India his sociopolitical thought has acquired respect across political spectrum and influenced various spheres of life like socioeconomic, education and Government policies of affirmative action by socioeconomic and legal incentives.

Ambedkar organized untouchable political parties and social organizations, and served in the legislative councils of British India. He would intensify his criticism of orthodox Hindu society, as well as his criticism of slavery and exclusivism in Islam. Despite this, his reputation as a scholar led to his appointment as free India's first law minister, and chairman of the committee responsible to draft a constitution. Ambedkar's work would guarantee political, economic and social freedoms for untouchables and other ethnic, social and religious communities of India. His polemical condemnation of Hinduism and attacks on Islam would make him unpopular and controversial, although his conversion to Buddhism sparked a revival in interest of Buddhist philosophy in India. In 1926, he became a nominated member of the Bombay Legislative Council. By 1927 Dr. Ambedkar decided to launch active movements against untouchability. He did begin with public movements and marches to open up & share public drinking water resources to which until then untouchable communities had no access; also he put up a struggle for entry in Hindu Temples which was not allowed by upper caste communities.

Poona Pact: Ambedkar had become one of the most prominent untouchable political figures of the time. He had grown increasingly critical of mainstream Indian political parties for their perceived lack of emphasis for the elimination of the caste system. Ambedkar criticized the Indian National Congress and its leader Mahatma

Gandhi, whom he accused of reducing the untouchable community to a figure of pathos. Ambedkar was also dissatisfied with the failures of British rule, and advocated a political identity for untouchables separate from both the Congress and the British. At a Depressed Classes Conference on August 8, 1930 Ambedkar outlined his political vision: "...Safety of the Depressed Classes hinged on their being independent of the Government and the Congress" both: "We must shape our course ourselves and by ourselves... Political power cannot be a panacea for the ills of the Depressed Classes. Their salvation lies in their social elevation. They must cleanse their evil habits. They must improve their bad ways of living.... They must be educated.... There is a great necessity to disturb their pathetic contentment and to instill into them that divine discontent which is the spring of all elevation."

Born in a class considered low and outcast. Dr. Ambedkar fought untiringly for the downtrodden. The boy who suffered bitter humiliation became the first Minister for Law in free India, and shaped the country's Constitution. A determined fighter, a deep scholar, human to the tips of his fingers.

We Need Dharma—But Casteism Should Go: 'Undouchablity' is a branch of casteism; until casteism is wiped out 'untouchability' will not go – this was Ambedkar's firm belief. He argued that to wipe out casteism, political power was very necessary. He believed that Dharma was essential for men. But he revolted against those who, in the name of Dharma, treated some of their fellowmen like animals. Many people criticised him. Some newspapers also wrote against him. There were many occasions when his life was in danger. Also, Ambedkar knew from his own experience that even a bright man could not come up in life vacuse of casteism. People give his cast importance and make him powerless. Ambedkar fought casteism. He was disgusted to find how difficult it was to secure justice and to find how many men were still narrow-minded. He even said that it would be better to give up the Hindu Dharma itself.

Muslim and Christian priest and missionaries learnt about this declaration; they tried very hard to attract Ambedkar. They met and assured him that the 'untouchables' who changed their religion would be given equal status in their society.

2

Dr. Ambedkar: A Thorough Democrat

Though Ambedkar headed the committee that drafted the Constitution of the democratic republic of India, he was never fully satisfied with the democracy which came to be established in India. In his opinion, "A democratic form of government presupposes a democratic form of a society. The formal framework of democracy is of no value and would indeed be a misfit if there was no social democracy. It may not be necessary for a democratic society to be marked by unity, by community of purpose, by loyalty to public ends and by mutuality of sympathy. But it does unmistakably involve two things. The first is an attitude of mind, and attitude of respect and equality towards their fellows. The second is a social organisation free from rigid social barriers. Democracy is incompatible and inconsistent with isolation and exclusiveness resulting in the distinction between the privileged and the unprivileged." "Democracy is not a form of government, but a form of social organisation", he asserted.

He further elaborated, "What we must do is not to content ourselves with mere political democracy. We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there is at the base of it, a social democracy."

Ambedkar underlined the limitations of formal law and Constitution: "The prevalent view is that once the rights are enacted in law then they are safeguarded. This again is an unwarranted assumption. As experience proves, rights are protected not by law but by social and moral conscience of the society. If social conscience is such that it is prepared to recognise the rights which law

proposes to enact, rights will be safe and secure. But if the fundamental rights are opposed by the community, no law, no parliament, no judiciary can guarantee them in the real sense of the world. What is the use of fundamental rights to the untouchables in India?" "If I find the constitution being misused, I shall be the first to burn it," he declared.

Ambedkar also had certain premonitions about the rise of authoritarian forces in India which is coming true before our eyes: "On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognising the principle of one-man-one-vote and one-vote-one-value. In our social and economic life, we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one-man-one-value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril". The Sangh Parivar outfits rally tribals and dalits only to use them to attack Christian missionaries as witnessed in Orissa or to launch pogroms against Muslims as seen in Gujarat, and thereby endanger democracy. To frustrate the designs of the Sangh Parivar it is necessary that today communists and genuine Ambedkarites should come together to defend democracy from communal fascists, a democracy to establish which Ambedkar fought so hard.

In his last days, Ambedkar raised a note of warning: "The point is that India once lost the independence she had. Will she lose it a second time? It is this thought which makes me most anxious for the future. What perturbs me greatly is the fact that not only India has once before lost her independence, but she lost it by treachery of some of her own people...Will history repeat itself? It is this thought which fills me with anxiety.. Will Indians place the country above their creed or creed above their country? I do not know, But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost forever. This eventuality we

all must resolutely guard against. We must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of our blood!" The rise of Hindutva forces who totally cringe before the US imperialism but at the same time are bent upon establishing a fascistic Hindu rashtra has proved how correct this warning was. As Ambedkar called upon us, we must defend this freedom and democracy with the last drop of our blood.

Baba Saheb Ambedkar has undoubtedly been the central figure in the epistemology of the Dalit universe. It is difficult to imagine anything serious or important in their collective life that is totally untouched by Ambedkar. For the Dalit masses he is everything together; a scholar par excellence in the realm of scholarship, a Moses or messiah who led his people out of bondage and ignominy on to the path of pride, and a Bodhisatva in the pantheon of Buddhism. He is always bedecked with superlatives, quite like God, whatever may be the context in Dalit circles.

It is not difficult to see the reason behind the obeisance and reverence that dalits have for Ambedkar. They see him as one who devoted every moment of his life thinking about and struggling for their emancipation, who took the might of the establishment head on in defence of their cause; who sacrificed all the comforts and conveniences of life that were quite within his reach to be on their side; who conclusively disproved the theory of caste based superiority by rising to be the tallest amongst the tall despite enormous odds, and finally as one who held forth the torch to illuminate the path of their future. Few in the history of millenniums of their suffering had so much as looked at them as humans and empathised with them as fellow beings.

He was their own among these few. It was he, who forsook his high pedestal, climbed down to their level, gave them a helping hand and raised them to human stature. It is a commonplace occurrence to see dalits right from the humble landless labourer in villages to the highly placed bureaucrat in corridors of power, emotionally attributing their all to him.

They all believe that but for him, they would still be living like their forefathers, with spittoons around their necks and broom sticks to their behind.

It is thus natural for dalits to place him at the centre as their beacon and conduct their collective affairs as directed by its beam. This beam however is not monochromatic like a laser beam, to use an analogy from physics, but is composed of many light frequencies, the filters for which are controlled not by the masses but by some others. They manipulate this beam as per their desire, sometimes letting some frequencies pass and some times some other. They could selectively amplify some part and de-amplify the other and present an entirely different spectrum. What reaches the masses, thus, is not the holistic and true picture of 'Ambedkar' but its part, sometimes a distorted part, carefully filtered out and amplified by the 'technicians'.

This fragmented and false Ambedkar is what reaches the masses. For them, Ambedkar is no more a historical personality named Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. He is already metamorphosed into a symbol—a symbol for their collective aspiration, an icon for the thesis of their emancipation. Because for the masses icons come handy. They are sans complexity of the main body, practical useable artefacts. Iconisation of the great heroes and their ideas at the hands of masses is thus inevitable. Human history is replete with such icons; rather it is largely made of them. The Dalit politicians who never let the masses see the material aspects of their problems and kept them entangled in the cobweb of emotional issues have moreover promoted iconisation of Baba Saheb Ambedkar.

The history of post-Ambedkar Dalit movement is largely influenced by the icons of Ambedkar that were produced by the sociopolitical dynamics of post-independence India. The process of iconisation, whatever be the motivations, has to have the basis, howsoever tenuous, in the material reality, in the facts about the subject. Being essentially a simplification of a complex reality, it involves the playing up of facts as per one's proclivities and propensities. The icons in Ambedkar himself and simultaneously highlights the motive force behind the underlying distortions that they embody. While it largely holds these icons responsible for the current sorry State of the Dalit movement based on the near-

monotheistic devotion of dalits towards Baba Saheb Ambedkar, it still considers that the conceptual framework that he reflects could be used, not only to further the emancipatory struggles of dalits to its logical end but also to promote a true democratic revolution in India, provided it is seen in a radical light.

The first part reviews the post-Ambedkar Dalit movement, essentially in relation to certain significant milestones or trends and attempts to trace the specific icon of Ambedkar that underscores each. The second part discusses the general limitations of transpositioning the ideologies, characterising specific episodes in the history across the historical periods and in specific reviews the predominant profiles of the Ambedkar-icons.

It outlines the need to redefine Ambedkar, if he is to be the ideological icon to guide the Dalit movement to its logical end. The third part discusses certain predominant issues that will have to be essentially resolved in the redefinition project and gives clues for profiling 'Ambedkar' for the future Dalit movement. The fourth and final part sums it up, emphasising the relevance and validity of the basic framework implied in Ambedkar's work—to view the contradictions in the society from the standpoint of the worst victim and work for their resolution, to bring about a democratic revolution in India.

Various icons that the post-Ambedkar movement of dalits appear to have built up, characterise Ambedkar as the maker of the Indian Constitution, provider of the present order, a Bodhisatva, a constitutionalist, a messiah, a saviour, an SC leader, a liberal democrat, a staunch anti-Communist, a social engineer who believed in the reform process and disliked revolutions. It is heavily sculpted by the petty-bourgeoisie outlook that has completely hegemonised the Dalit movement. It rarely reflects the dreamer in him who was perpetually in search of ways and means to see the human society sans exploitation, injustice and humbug.

Many students of the Dalit movement are influenced by these post-Ambedkar reflections in characterising Ambedkar as the bourgeoisie liberal democrat. Does it really project what Ambedkar stood for? Does it capture the full essence of his movement? More

importantly, is that the Ambedkar whom we are going to use as the weapon in the emancipatory struggle of dalits?

Dalits as a social group, are still the poorest of poor. A negligible minority has managed to escape poverty limits and to locate itself on to a continuum ranging up to a reasonable level of prosperity with the help of certain State policies like reservation and political patronage. In social terms however, all dalits, irrespective of their economic standing, still suffer oppression. This social oppression varies from the crudest variety of untouchability, still being practised in rural areas, to the sophisticated forms of discrimination encountered even in the modern sectors of urban life. Although, the statistics indicate that dalits have made significant progress on almost all parameters during the last five decades, the relative distance between them and non-dalits seems to have remained the same or has increased.

More than 75 per cent of the Dalit workers are still connected with land; 25 per cent being the marginal and small farmers and the balance 50 per cent being landless labourers. The proportion of dalits landless labourers to the total labourers has shown a steady rising trend.

In urban areas, they work mainly in the unorganised sector where the exploitation compares well with that of a feudal rural setting. Out of the total Dalit population of 138 million, the number of dalits in services falling in the domain of reservations does not exceed 1.3 million including sweepers; less than even a percent. And this too would be grossly misleading, as out of this 1.3 million the relatively well-off group A and B officers (in which most of the clerical staff of the PSUs also come), count only 72,212 as against 131,841 sweepers.

With the new politico-economic order emerging in the world, the grammar of the Dalit liberation struggle is going to be totally different from that familiar to dalits. The onslaught of the adversarial forces is being felt world over by all the oppressed people and it would be folly for dalits not to feel a part of the latter. Their objective situation as a social block is not represented by the minuscule minority that managed to find themselves in the

organised sectors of economy, but by the vast majority who are left behind in the villages or the numbers who toil in the unorganised sectors in towns and cities. They need the weaponry for battling out their salvation. This battle is to be waged simultaneously on two fronts, marked by the caste and class. These terms under segmented and sectarian usage came to bear an erroneous exclusivity.

Since, Ambedkar still provides a better framework for their problems than any other, and since he commands an unchangeable place in their hearts, the weapons in his armoury needs dusting and sharpening. They will need a review for their effective application in the changing context and possibly, substantial supplementation and replenishment. Ambedkar, quite similar to Buddha in his own hands, needs redefinition. The folklore 'Ambedkar' needs to be replaced by the radical 'Ambedkar', who would inspire people to claim the whole world as theirs and not to beg for petty favours from the robbers.

It is the responsibility of all those who are capable of seeing the reality, to contribute to this task. For, without such a redefinition, Ambedkar could be fossilised as god but would fail in the emancipation project; he might be raised to the highest pedestal by the vested interests but then he would be unable to reach out to where he is most needed; he would lose out to the parody of history.

VISIONS AND ICONS OF GREAT PERSON

Every great person has a vision that impels all her/his works. Its discernibility may vary from case to case, generally being the function of the degree of turbulence around her/him, her/his relative position within the power structure in the given environment, her/his own equipment and conception of self-role. Marx, for instance, offers an articulate vision in clearest terms as he assumed the primary role of a philosopher to bring about revolutionary change, whereas Ambedkar had donned the mantle of mass-leadership in his primary role to spearhead the change; the degree of turbulence in the work domain of Marx had been minimal as he basically struggled in the realm of thought spanning

complete human history whereas Ambedkar situated himself in the political turbulence that obtained in India as his strategy; Ambedkar's position in the power structure that bounded his work domain was certainly weak relative to Marx's.

This is neither to undermine the role of Marx as the activist constantly trying out his philosophy in the realm of practice nor to belittle the problems he suffered in life. With regard to personal equipment, both Ambedkar as well as Marx, could be taken to be equally equipped to undertake their respective tasks that they had undertaken. Marx had started off with philosophy and adopted the class-consciousness of the proletariat quite unlike Ambedkar, in whose case it was his own consciousness—the consciousness of an untouchable built up through concrete experience that had propelled his philosophical search.

Marx was well aware of his role in the revolutionary project, that he had to provide requisite tools and tackles for the working class for bringing about a change in the overall interest of humanity. But, Ambedkar was always loaded with anxiety as he had to strategize his way through the political maze around him, winning for dalits the maximum he could in a short span of time. In process, his role also underwent transformation with the expanse of the battleground. Inevitably, his thoughts and action always remained context-laden, polemical and pragmatically purposeful. It is therefore a relatively difficult task to discern a coherent vision underscoring the life work of Baba Saheb Ambedkar.

It is a moot point as to what extent a great person, who is essentially anchored in her/his space and time, could transcend these barriers and be equally effective in a different situation. A great person basically is the product of prevailing social relations. It is a particular moment in history that reflects an acute demand for such a person. Depending upon her/his location in the social setting, she/he imparts her/his individual feature to the historical moments and movements in terms of working out specific means for resolving contradictions that engender them and releasing the forces of history in a specific direction. The masses whose cause she / he espouses throng around her/him in this process, depending upon the level of their collective consciousness. The

longevity of the ideas a great person propounds in a historical setting depends upon the nature of contradictions, the size and expanse of problems and the time domain in which they are situated.

Generally, the classes that share the vision and ideology of such persons tend to iconise them with specific attributes of their class choice, in an attempt to institutionalise the latter. In this process, they would de-contextise some of the ideas and proffer them as universal theorems, if they perceive a pay-off for themselves in the sphere hegemonised by them.

This phenomenon becomes clear only over a long time horizon. For instance, the religious principles that were sprouted in the soil of certain specific social relations have basically blossomed in an alien soil with the help of the nutrients of class interests. Very broadly speaking, the trend of iconisation of great persons and the attempt of institutionalising their ideas is a gauge to assess the forces of status quo in the society.

COMMITMENT AND CONSTRAINT

In the case of Baba Saheb Ambedkar, iconisation was inevitable. The combination of factors like his high stature, his devotion to the cause of his people; the historical setting in which he lived, the low level of literacy and political consciousness in masses; and the vested interests of internal as well as external people have been its cause. The problem is not with iconisation as it is with its multiplicity. A question may be pertinently asked can Ambedkar be uniquely represented by a single icon? As Prof. Upendra Bakshi had outlined in one of his articles during the centenary year of his birth anniversary that there were many Ambedkars and had questioned as to which Ambedkar do we commemorate? When he said so, Prof. Bakshi was referring to different facets of Ambedkar's personality that could be virtually segregated.

One can even periodise some of them. For example, the pre-1942 Ambedkar as a young, untouchable man endowed with highest scholastic distinctions, struggling within and without for the emancipation of his people is a grossly different personality

than the Ambedkar as a member of the viceroy's Executive Council or the Ambedkar as the law minister in the Nehru cabinet in the post-independence India or the Ambedkar as the chairman of the drafting committee for the Indian Constitution or even the Ambedkar of still later years who had completely identified himself with Buddhism and in a way completely spiritualised himself.

What comes clearly however, is that the changes in his outlook and role were essentially driven by his unstilted commitment to the cause of emancipation of oppressed humanity in general and dalits in particular. He might not have had appropriate methodological tools to deal with the problem at hand. With the equipment that basically belonged to a school of social engineers, he tried to dissect history. Paradoxically, he attempted to demolish the establishment with the very tools that were forged to serve the ruling classes. By training he did not have the facility to look at history as the continuum of human struggle with a certain inherent logic. He did use history as a repertoire of human episodes and attributed even logic to it but its source was externalised.

NON-DIALECTICAL SOLUTION: STATE AND RELIGION

It appears that Baba Saheb Ambedkar had really internalised the doctrine of momentariness (*Anityatawad* and later *Kshanikwad*) of Buddha and therefore even refused to care for consistency in his views and opinions. This doctrine states that every thing changes every moment, that things are constantly becoming. It follows that in this situation of flux not even mental processes could be static, they had essentially to match the dynamicity of the material world. He thus never hesitated in changing his thoughts or strategy as per the unfolding situation. Viewed another way, these changes can be understood in relation to foci of control.

The degree of consistency in thought and action is generally inversely proportional to the distance of the subject from the foci of control of its surrounding. Ambedkar had nil or little control over his situation. He had to consistently create space for himself and strategize to influence the situation to his advantage. (The dynamics of the situation was propelled by the forces that were variously placed in the adversary camps.) The framework within

which he conceived his struggle had exposed him to his lot to respond to this dynamics. The hallmark of Ambedkar's thoughts is the dynamic rationale, which he has consistently employed to comprehend situations and to strategize his response thereto. 'Ambedkar' therefore cannot be captured in static terms. His icon will have to represent the dynamism that he lived. Since, this is an infeasible proposition; we will have to discern the underscoring vision behind his works, the intransient essence of his entire mission to create a suitable icon. This icon, even if it does not resemble the familiar Ambedkar, alone could be the beacon of the Dalit movement.

The concept of *Anityawad* in Buddhism essentially belongs to dialectics that has made Buddha an early dialectician philosopher. The dichotomy that creeps in can only be resolved by dialectical method. It may be questioned whether Ambedkar's method was dialectical.

It appears that while he accepts constant becoming of things as the principle underscoring the universe, he faces a dilemma with respect to the conception of order in this State. It could be resolved dialectically in terms of systemic attribute of self-regulation—a characteristic of internal control. But the conventional conception of order, essentially a non-dialectical conception, leads to externalisation of control. Ambedkar, having experienced the brutal aspects of history and unbridled exploitation of man by man, appears in need of a control mechanism operating at two levels, *viz.*, internal and external, so as to maintain the societal order in the desired State. His internal control mechanism is the moral code provided by the religion and the one for external control is the State.

If this moral code is internalised by all individuals and in turn by society as the summation of the latter (as the liberal tradition held), society is expected to have an internal order. If however the baser instincts of some people or group of people defy this order, either as a result of conflicting codes they follow or for any other reason, then in such case the State will step in and restore the order. The will of the collective is supposed to be embodied in

the State by the Constitution. It is therefore that Ambedkar has reservation in agreeing with Marx that 'religion was the opium of masses' or the 'State shall eventually wither away'. Ambedkar certainly did not know that the order could be the attribute of the system itself. It is only in the sixties that Cybernetics principles came to lime light that the complex probabilistic systems, which the social systems certainly are, do have the inherent capability of self-regulating and self-organising control.

CONFLICT, CONTROVERSY AND CONGRESS

Dr. Ambedkar was now in the midst of his career; this was the central and perhaps most controversy-filled decade of his whole complex life. He was often at odds with Congress, and was attacked by the nationalist press as a traitor. But as always, through all difficulties and frustrations, he persevered.

1930: On Aug. 8, Dr. Ambedkar presided over the Depressed Classes Congress at Nagpur, and made a major speech: he endorsed Dominion status, and criticized Gandhi's Salt March and civil disobedience movement as inopportune; but he also criticized British colonial misgovernment, with its famines and immiseration. He argued that the "safety of the Depressed Classes" hinged on their "being independent of the Government and the Congress" both: "We must shape our course ourselves and by ourselves." His conclusion emphasized self-help: "Political power cannot be a panacea for the ills of the Depressed Classes. Their salvation lies in their social elevation. They must cleanse their evil habits. They must improve their bad ways of living.... They must be educated.... There is a great necessity to disturb their pathetic contentment and to instil into them that divine discontent which is the spring of all elevation."

Dr. Ambedkar was invited by the Viceroy to be a delegate to the Round Table Conference, and left for London in October. He participated extensively in the work of the Round Table Conference, often submitting written statements of his views. His views at the time were described in an unpublished manuscript later found among his papers: "The Untouchables and the Pax Britannica".

"Prince and Outcast at Dinner in London end Age-old Barrier: Gaikwad of Baroda is Host to 'Untouchable' and Knight of High Hindu Caste.."

"But I tell you that the Congress is not sincere about its professions. Had it been sincere, it would have surely made the removal of untouchability a condition, like the wearing of khaddar, for becoming a member of the Congress." On August 14th, 1931, Dr. Ambedkar met with Gandhi for the first time. From Gandhi's side, their discussion was an absent-minded rebuke that seemed to be more in sorrow than in anger; from Ambedkar's side, it was an outburst of passionate reproach.

1932: The All-Indian Depressed Classes Conference, held at Kamtee near Nagpur on May 6th, backed Dr. Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates, rejecting compromises proposed by others. Gandhi, in Yeravda jail, started a fast to the death against the separate electorates granted to the Depressed Classes by Ramsay McDonald's Communal Award. By September 23, a very reluctant Dr. Ambedkar was obliged by the pressure of this moral blackmail to accept representation through joint electorates instead. The result was the Poona Pact. In 1933, Gandhi replaced his journal "Young India" with a new one called "Harijan," and undertook a 21-day "self-purification fast" against untouchability.

1933: Dr. Ambedkar participated in the work of the "Joint Committee on Indian Legislative Reform", examining a number of significant witnesses.

1935: Dr. Ambedkar was appointed Principal of the Government Law College, and became a professor there as well; he held these positions for two years. In May, Dr. Ambedkar's wife Ramabai died after a long illness. Her great wish had been to make a pilgrimage to Pandharpur, but since as an untouchable she would not have been allowed to enter the temple, her husband had never allowed her to go.

On Oct. 13th, Dr. Ambedkar presided over the Yeola Conversion Conference, held in Yeola, in Nasikh District. He advised the Depressed Classes to abandon all agitation for temple-

entry privileges; instead, they should leave Hinduism entirely and embrace another religion. He vowed, "I solemnly assure you that I will not die as a Hindu."

The struggle for social justice began to receive increasing attention and support from progressive writers. Mulk Raj Anand's powerful novel "Untouchable" (1935) was followed by "Coolie" (1936), with a foreword by E. M. Forster; both works called international attention to caste and class injustices. In Hindi, there was the work of Premchand.

In December, Dr. Ambedkar was invited by the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore, a caste-reform organization, to preside over its annual conference in the spring of 1936.

1935/36: He composed (or began to compose?), but did not publish, a brief, moving, and largely autobiographical memoir called Waiting for a Visa.

1936: On April 13-14th, he addressed the Sikh Mission Conference in Amritsar, and reiterated his intention of renouncing Hinduism.In late April, the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal realized the radical nature of its guest's planned speech, and withdrew its earlier invitation. On May 15th, Dr. Ambedkar published the speech he would have given, with an introductory account of the whole controversy. The result, a slim little book called "The Annihilation of Caste", became famous at once.

On May 31st, Dr. Ambedkar addressed the Mumbai Elaka Mahar Parishad (Bombay Mahar Society), during a meeting at Naigaum (Dadar), in Bombay. He spoke in Marathi, to his own people, with vividness and poignancy: "What Path to Salvation?". This was the only time he addressed an audience expressly limited to Mahars.

In August, he founded his first political party, the Independent Labour Party, which contested 17 seats in the 1937 General Elections, and won 15.

The Maharaja of Travancore issued a proclamation allowing temple entry to the Depressed Classes; this was the first such event in modern India.

1937: Dr. Ambedkar published the second edition of "The Annihilation of Caste", adding a concluding appendix that featured

a debate with Gandhi over the speech. This work remained a best-seller, going through many editions in the coming years—and exciting much controversy. "It was logic on fire, pinching and pungent, piercing and fiery, provocative and explosive."

1938: Over Dr. Ambedkar's vigorous protests, in January Congress adopted Gandhi's own term "Harijans" ("Children of God") as the official name for the "scheduled castes." In protest against a term that he considered condescending and meaningless, Dr. Ambedkar and his party staged a walkout from the Bombay Legislative Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar made a number of significant speeches to the Assembly, 1938-39.

1939: In January, he delivered to the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics a lecture called "Federation versus Freedom".

During the debate over Congress's plan to leave the government in protest at not having been consulted about the declaration of war on Germany, Dr. Ambedkar made his own loyalties very clear: "Wherever there is any conflict of interests between the country and the Untouchables, so far as I am concerned, the Untouchables' interests will take precedence over the interests of the country. I am not going to support a tyrannising majority simply because it happens to speak in the name of the country.... As between the country and myself, the country will have precedence; as between the country and the Depressed Classes, the Depressed Classes will have precedence."

In November, Congress left the government. Jinnah arranged the celebration of a "Day of Deliverance," and Dr. Ambedkar enthusiastically joined him. Dr. Ambedkar was careful to emphasize, however, that this was an anti-Congress rather than an anti-Hindu move; if Congress interpreted it as anti-Hindu, the reason could only be, he said, that Congress was a Hindu body after all.

Dr. Ambedkar was now lecturing and writing constantly, and was heavily involved in politics. With Independence (and Partition), he joined Nehru's cabinet as India's first Minister of Law, and became the Chairman of the Drafting Committee for the Constitution. Framing the Constitution and guiding it through to adoption was his greatest political achievement.

1940: In December, Dr. Ambedkar published the first edition of his "Thoughts on Pakistan". In this work he argued that though partition would be an unfortunate thing, it wouldn't be the worst possible outcome, and if the Muslims wanted it they had a perfect right to claim it.

1942: He founded his second political party, the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, which didn't do so well in the elections of 1946. Dr. Ambedkar was inducted into the Viceroy's Executive Council as Labour Member, a position which he held until his resignation in June 1946. His thoughtful comments in that forum cover various topics.

Congress started the "Quit India" movement. Dr. Ambedkar severely criticized this move. He described it as "both irresponsible and insane, a bankruptcy of statesmanship and a measure to retrieve the Congress prestige that had gone down since the war started. It would be madness, he said, to weaken law and order at a time when the barbarians were at the gates."

1943: On January 19th he delivered the Presidential Address on the occasion of the 101st birth anniversary of Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade. It was published in book form in April, under the title "Ranade, Gandhi, and Jinnah".

In September he also prepared and published the vigorous memorandum, "Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchables".

1944: On January 29th, he presided over the second meeting of the Scheduled Caste Federation, in Kanpur.

1945: In February, he published a revised version of "Thoughts on Pakistan"; this second, expanded edition was called "Pakistan; or Partition of India". A third edition of this book was published in 1946.

On May 6th he addressed the Annual Conference of the All India Scheduled Caste Federation, held at Parel, Bombay. This speech was soon published as "The Communal Deadlock and a Way to Solve It".

In June, he published a political manifesto detailing the problems of dealing with Congress, and accusing it of many acts

of betrayal: "What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables". The next year, he published a second edition, with major revisions in one chapter.

1946: In June, he founded Siddharth College, in Bombay; it was a project of the People's Education Society, which he had founded in 1945.

In October, he published "Who Were the Sudras? How They Came to Be the Fourth Varna in the Indo-Aryan Society". He dedicated the book to the great early reformer Jotiba Phule.

1947: In March he published "States and Minorities: What Are their Rights and How to Secure them in the Constitution of Free India", a memorandum on fundamental rights, minority rights, safeguards for the Depressed Classes, and the problems of Indian states.

Dr. Ambedkar accepted Nehru's invitation to become Minister of Law in the first Cabinet of independent India. On August 29th he was appointed Chairman of the Drafting Committee for the new Constitution.

1948: In the last week of February, the Draft Constitution was submitted for public discussion and debate: Constitutional discussions and debates.

On April 15th, Dr. Ambedkar married Dr. Sharda Kabir (a Saraswat Brahmin) in Delhi; she adopted the name Savita. He was now diabetic and increasingly ill, and she took care of him for the rest of his life. In October, he prepared a memorandum on "Maharashtra as a Linguistic Province", expressing his views for submission to the Linguistic Provinces Commission. He published "The Untouchables: a Thesis on the Origin of Untouchability" (New Delhi: Amrit Book Company), as a sequel to his book on the Sudras.

As always on this subject, he wrote with passion. In the Preface he said, "The Hindu Civilisation.... is a diabolical contrivance to suppress and enslave humanity. Its proper name would be infamy. What else can be said of a civilisation which has produced a mass of people... who are treated as an entity beyond human intercourse and whose mere touch is enough to cause pollution?"

In November, the Draft Constitution with its 315 articles and 8 schedules was formally introduced to the Constituent Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar concluded his speech: "I feel that the Constitution is workable; it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and in war time. Indeed, if I may say so, if things go wrong under the new Constitution the reason will not be that we had a bad Constitution. What we will have to say is that Man was vile."

1949: In November, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution, including Article 11, which formally abolished untouchability.

1950: Dr. Ambedkar gave several addresses about Buddhism; in May, he flew to Colombo, in Sri Lanka, to pursue further Buddhist connections.

1951: In February, he introduced in Parliament the "Hindu Code Bill" that he had drafted, which included greatly expanded rights for women; it proved very controversial, and consideration of it was postponed: on the Hindu Code Bill.

In September, Dr. Ambedkar resigned from the Cabinet, embittered over the failure of Nehru and the Congress to back the Hindu Code Bill as they had earlier pledged to do. He became the "Leader of the Opposition".

1952: Dr. Ambedkar received an honorary L.L.D. degree from Columbia University as part of its Bicentennial Special Convocation. The President described him as "one of India's leading citizens—a great social reformer and a valiant upholder of human rights."

1953: His political thinking included analysis of the issue of linguistic states; he published "Need for Checks and Balances" on this question. In 1955, he was still working on the subject, as the preface to "Thoughts on Linguistic States" testified.

1954: In the midst of his round of (increasingly embittered) Parliamentary and other activity, his health gave way; he was confined to bed for two months.

While dedicating a new Buddhist vihara near Poona, Dr. Ambedkar announced that he was writing a book on Buddhism, and that as soon as it was finished, he planned to make a formal

conversion to Buddhism. He also claimed that the image of Vithoba at Pandharpur was in reality an image of the Buddha, and said that he would write a thesis to prove this claim.

1956: Dr. Ambedkar brought the manuscript of "The Buddha and His Dhamma" to completion. "In February 1956 two new chapters are added to it: 'There is no god'; 'There is no soul'.... On March 15, 1956, Ambedkar wrote the Preface to his book in his own handwriting and dictated it to Rattu [his secretary]." Printing began in May, but was slowed by constant last-minute revisions of the proofs.

From June to October, he was bedridden in his Delhi residence. His eyes were failing, he suffered from side effects of the drugs he was given for his diabetes, he felt deeply depressed.

His formal conversion took place on Oct. 14th in Nagpur, a town selected for reasons he explained in his moving speech, "Why Was Nagpur Chosen?". Many thousands of Mahars and other Dalits accepted Buddhism along with him.

In November, he flew to Kathmandu to attend the Fourth World Buddhist Conference.

On December 2, he completed the manuscript of "The Buddha or Karl Marx", his last finished work, and gave it for typing.

On the night of December 5 or the early morning of December 6, he died quietly in his sleep; on December 7 there was a huge Buddhist-style funeral procession in Bombay, and he was cremated on the seashore.

1957: "The Buddha and His Dhamma", Dr. Ambedkar's own version of a Buddhist scripture for his people, was posthumously published, by Siddharth College Publications, Bombay.

1957 and beyond: A number of unfinished typescripts and handwritten drafts were found among his notes and papers and gradually made available. Among these were "Waiting for a Visa", which probably dates from 1935-36.

LIBERALISM AND REFORMISM

By upbringing and training Ambedkar was influenced by western liberalism. The openness and liberal values of the western

society had struck him with pleasant surprise by his own admission. There is a reason to believe that he had studied Marxism. His first essay on caste reflects some amount of analytical orientation of Marxism. One of the subjects in his curriculum also happened to be related to Marxian socialism and his guide Prof. Seligman was well versed with the economic interpretation of history. However, as his later work reveals, Ambedkar reflected more closeness with the liberal tradition than Marxism. However, consciously he never identified himself with the Liberalism. Being aware of its pitfalls, he needed to declare that he was not a liberal reformist, although while having reservations with the postulations of Marxism he could never hide his attraction towards it.

The pitfall of his thinking emanates from his conception of the moral force of religion divorced from the material reality. He therefore hopes that without any bloodshed, the society based on liberty, equality and fraternity could be created. Of course as hypothesized above, he conceptualizes the constitutional State based on these principles. With this wishful thinking, he tends to ignore the fact that regardless of the pretensions of ruling classes, the impact of liberal governance in the multicentric iniquitous society is bound to result in sustaining multicentricity and inequality.

This liberalism rather promotes politics of casteism and communalism, schism among dalits, their use in political power games, subversion of their real problems and protects the interests of the few rich. It was a kind of contradiction in terms to assume that liberal democracy, which is actually the manifestation of the political power of the bourgeois, will do justice to the paupers. It might appear to extend certain concessions to the weaker sections, but its real motive is to maintain the existing rule of the ruling classes. Liberal democracy might appear better than the decadent Hindu caste system but it is incapable of bringing any real change in favour of dalits. It muffles the tension of the exploitative system and kills the revolutionary motivation of its victims.

REDEFINITION PROJECT

Many of the constructs employed by Babasaheb Ambedkar in his working have a qualified meaning. Firstly, they are not

absolute as they appear. They are the derivatives of his thought process, the source of which could be traced to his basic objective of annihilation of castes and creating a society based on equality, liberty and fraternity. Even these three principles that he held so dear to his heart, bear very different meaning from the familiar ones associated with the French Revolution. He said he had them from Buddha. What Buddha said also is to be understood from his interpretation, which could be as different from the accepted version as to be disproved by the Buddhist church.

His Buddha and His Dhamma, for instance, had faced this kind of disapproval initially from many Buddhists. Understanding Ambedkar thus essentially demands extra consideration and care about the specific meanings of the constructs and concepts he uses. The lack of it has already caused much misunderstanding among many people. It is one thing to have a clear understanding of what he said or meant but quite another to extrapolate it to something congruent to his basic objective or vision that may be useable in shaping the future movement.

Quite like Marx had said of philosophy, it could be said that the issue is not to understand Ambedkar as he is but to possibly think of him as a weapon in the struggle to which he devoted his life. The redefinition referred to here will have to essentially address both these issues. From the viewpoint of one seeking a revolutionary change, there are indeed many dimensions on which Ambedkar calls for critical interpretation. Many of the concepts that seem to act as the props for his formulations are rooted in the reactionary camp.

Paradoxically, he brings them to work for his emancipatory project, which potentially is no less than a revolution. Predominant among these concepts are identified as State, religion, liberal democracy, constitutionalism, revolution, socialism, violence and Marxism, that some way or the other have been the cause of misunderstandings about him.

It is important to appreciate that Ambedkar employed the search process that is essentially rational and the underlying objective undoubtedly radical. There could be flaws in the specific design or the application of the search process, depending upon the State of his knowledge and complexity of the situation to

which it is applied. Besides this, the end result depends upon the repertoire of alternatives used for the search. What it means is that the specific method, thought or action of Ambedkar may constitute the historical facts but they cannot be taken in their face value if one wants to comprehend the ideological aspects of Ambedkar. In his usage of the above concepts for instance he does not always exercise the academic rigour.

Besides the reason that much of his usage was addressed to the un-academic lot, most of the times he tended to impart his own meanings to the terms he used. With the changed contexts or with the change in information, he readily changed his opinions. For, hypothetically speaking, if Ambedkar had lived longer he would have certainly changed his views, looking at more information available or experiencing the undesired aftermath of some of his own beliefs and opinions.

Had he not disowned the Constitution, which he had so laboriously written and so forcefully defended, saying that he was used as the hack to write it? Whatever he had done had several limitations. He never hesitated to change his opinion or stand if he was convinced that it was right. The redefinition project proposed here, in a way, is something, which he has done himself, all his life and would have continued doing if he had been alive. It is essentially something in the nature of continuing his unfinished task. The methodological aspects of this exercise consists in the process of conceptualisation of the core vision and ideological proclivities of Ambedkar through the analytical study of his life within its contextual parameters, oriented towards capturing its intransient content.

It should reflect the basic purpose, that is, to see whether and how he could catalyse the emancipatory movement of dalits and in turn democratise the Indian society. This process may not be free from bias. The bias could be in favour of the change craved for by the have-nots, not of the ruling classes that has necessarily been colouring the history so far.

'AMBEDKAR' FOR THE MOVEMENT OF DALITS

'Ambedkar' for the Dalit movement, first of all, should be shorn of all the sectarian outlook that unfortunately came to be

associated with him. He was an iconoclast and therefore should inspire us to break such icons that are imbued with this outlook. Dalits have to demolish all the handiwork of the reactionaries and vested interests. The project of redefinition of Ambedkar should liberate him from the dens of the ruling class and bring him back to the huts in slums and villages where he rightly belongs.

The greatest thing about Ambedkar is his consistent anti-dogmatic stance. He never accepted any thing in name of authority. He hated humbug of every kind. He always approached problems with a student's sincerity and researcher's intellectual honesty. He gave a vision that even the ideologies are bound by the tenet of impermanence and no body should claim them validity beyond their times. His followers therefore can assume absolute liberty to think through things as per their own experience in changing times.

'AMBEDKAR' AGAINST EXPLOITATION

The underscoring vision in Ambedkar's thought and action is to be found in his yearning for the end of all kinds of exploitation. Whenever and wherever he smelt exploitation, he raised his voice against it. The caste system that subjugated more than one fifth of the population to levels worse than animals' for more than two millennia and which represented institutionalisation of the most heinous inequality by the Hindu religion as ordained by its gods, became the prime target of his life. He attacked it from the standpoint of its victims—the untouchables. He waged many battles; initially targeting the citadels of Brahminism—the custodian of the Hindu religious code, and later politicised the battle, realising the ineffectiveness of the former. He did not let this objective out of sight even for a moment and worked incessantly for its achievement. This Herculean task almost completely overshadows the fact that his struggles extend well beyond the caste struggles and rather encompass all other forms of exploitation.

Even the credit for struggling against untouchability was reluctantly granted to him by the establishment which had belittled him initially as merely a leader of his own caste—Mahar. This prejudicial treatment of Ambedkar could itself be taken as a

measure of the severity of the problematic of caste. The facts are clear today that not only was his struggle directed towards the emancipation of all the untouchables but also towards annihilation of the entire caste system. It was basically against the systemic exploitation that ran unabated for centuries. The protest against this inhuman system could be articulated only in a concrete situation, not in a vacuum.

He did not theorise the struggle on a hypothetical plane. He built it on the basis of real problems in a concrete situation. Unlike many cases, the motive force for his life mission was provided by his experience itself. Although he pitched his tents against Brahminism, he never bore any enmity against the Brahmins or identified any one for his friend or foe by caste.

The Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha that was the launch vehicle of his movement had majority from the forward caste people in its executive body. Even later, this intention of having a non-caste base for the organisation could be consistently seen in his movement, be it the Mahad struggle or the Indian Labour Party. He was perceptive enough to say that the Brahminism could exist in all the castes including the untouchables, for that was the essence of the casteism. It is tragic to find his legacy being monopolised today by only the scheduled castes.

Although, he considered the magnitude of the problem of emancipation of dalits is such as to warrant his sole attention, he did take cudgels for other oppressed entities like workers, peasants and women.

At one occasion in response to the accusation that he did not care for the tribals, he had to squarely admit the fact that he considered the problem at hand big enough to outlast his life and provokedly put that he never claimed to fight for whole humanity. Such instances though disturbing enough could be understood within their specific context. While dealing with the socioeconomic depravation of dalits, he comprehensively exposed certain systemic dimensions that help perpetuate exploitation.

For instance, he was well aware of the capitalist and imperialist oppression besides the decadent feudalism within which domain his problem lay.

Capitalism

During the colonial British regime, capitalism started taking root in India with the collaboration of Indian mercantile capital and British capital. Unlike Europe, it did not have to battle against feudalism; rather it was implanted on the trunk of the latter in India. As a result, even in the capitalist institutions in the cities, caste discrimination simultaneously existed. Ambedkar was quite aware of the exploitative potential of capital and hence he had declared capitalism and Brahminism as the twin enemy of his movement. Capitalism was in an infantile stage then but Brahminism encompassed the phases of slavery, feudalism and extended its tentacles as we see to the phase of imperialism. Moreover, he noted the reactionary compradore character of rising capitalism in the contemporary sectors of the economy and the inhuman exploitation of workers that it unleashed.

His, Indian Labour Party (ILP) was an attempt to take up the question of capitalist exploitation, as well as to combine the struggle on both caste and class basis. Various workers' problems were taken up by the ILP, the leadership of combined strike of the mill workers, parliamentary fight for the workers' interest in relation to the Industrial Disputes Act, and various legal reforms that were brought about while he was in the Executive Council of the Viceroy, can be the examples of his concern for workers' exploitation. It cannot be denied that his approach to these contemporary problems was closer to that of the Fabian socialists with whom he was more familiar. But, it was a model adopted out of familiarity and pragmatism, a matter of strategy, never thought out on an ideological plane to be a theoretical plank. Although, there cannot be any doubt that he stood against capitalism, he could not articulate a sound theoretical basis for doing so. Resultantly, his efforts remained constricted with a short view of workers' welfare but could not provide them a vision of their liberation.

Imperialism

Ambedkar's attitude towards imperialism has been projected in a distorted manner right from the beginning, mainly because he refused to take part in the freedom struggle or opposed Gandhi who for certain category of ignoramuses was the anti-imperialism

personified. He strategically sought to maintain neutrality vis-a-vis the colonial State. As per him, it would not be possible for the resourceless dalits to fight its mighty foes all together. He did not want to dissipate and squander his extremely limited resources on several fronts. He however knew the basic exploitative character of the colonial regime. At several occasions, he burst out saying that British imperialism and Indian feudalism were the two leaches that clung to Indian people. However, there was a fundamental difference between his and others' viewpoint. For instance, he did not approve equating opposition to imperialism with opposing the British. He noted that the opposition to imperialism couldn't be effective until its supporters within the country are left untouched.

The then leader of the Communist Party of India—Manabendranath Roy once met him at his residence and during discussions insisted that destruction of imperialism had to be the first and foremost objective of Indian politics. Ambedkar's response to him summarised his outlook towards this problem. He replied to Roy in explicit terms that without struggling against the landlords, mill owners, moneylenders—the friends of imperialism within the country, it was not possible to wage an effective fight against imperialism. It may be a matter of research but a priori his anti-imperialist attitude pervades even his writings as a student.

The validation of his stand comes from an entirely unrelated corner and nearly half a century later. Suniti Kumar Ghosh, (1985 and 1995) in his books has shown in great detail how the Congress representing landlords and capitalists had played a compradore role to serve the interest of imperialism during the so-called freedom struggle and how even after the transfer of power in 1947 the grip of imperialism instead of weakening became stronger. Does it not indicate that he was more correct than any of his contemporary politicians? The ones who biasedly wish to pronounce their half baked verdict that Ambedkar was a stooge of British merely on the basis of his acceptance of membership of Viceroy's Executive Council or talking to the Simon Commission, not only display their ignorance of history but also their casteist fangs. They ought to rethink the comparison between Ambedkar who, even being apparently a part of the imperialist apparatus

was perhaps striking at its roots by empowering the people and many others, so called nationalists, who after wearing the mask of anti-imperialism were indirectly strengthening its pillars.

In relation to British rule, Ambedkar basically makes two points. The first is that he questions the so-called freedom struggle launched under the leadership of Congress as an anti-imperialist struggle. He contended that the Congress basically represented the class of feudal lords and the urban capitalists—the two some exploiters of Indian masses. Although, it succeeded through the charismatic leadership of Gandhi in galvanising masses in its support, it essentially relied on bargaining with the colonial rulers for securing itself more share of power.

It always throttled the mass spontaneity as in the case of 1942-uprisings and actively opposed the genuine anti-imperialist struggles of the revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh. Ambedkar reflects the understanding of true character of the Congress in his own way, when he says that if Congress was fighting a real anti-imperialist war, he would whole heartedly support it. The rhetoric of such statement apart, for he never appears to even take a note of other truly anti-imperialist struggles like the one referred to above, it is enough to reveal his attitude towards imperialism and understanding of the class character of the Congress. He knew that the class character of the Congress would not permit it to don this role in reality. Ambedkar could see through the anti-imperialist masks the real fangs of an exploiter of masses.

He thus not only saw no point in siding with this more real exploiter of people than perhaps the colonial rulers, but also did not hesitate to openly oppose it when it came in the way of Dalit liberation. He smelt rot in all such struggles that refused to notice existence of inhuman exploitation of some of their own people within their precincts and tended to over-externalise their woes. Here lay his second point when he raised a question of Hindu imperialism perpetrated through its caste system that was certainly seen as more vicious by its victims than the British rule. It may be pertinent to ask of those who raise the issue of Ambedkar's attitude and conduct towards imperialism, to answer as to why the problem of untouchability or caste system that reduced its one—fifth of the population to subhuman levels did not find a

mere mention in the lofty discussions of freedom struggle that predated Ambedkar's raising it. The anti-imperialist aspiration also could be seen in the context of the class/caste division in the society.

The battle for the lost kingdom waged by the vanquished lords also could be camouflaged as an anti-imperialist struggle and at the same time the genuine peoples' anti-imperialist aspiration manifested in the form of say anti-feudal struggle could be condemned as the pro-imperialism, merely because it directed its gun towards the props of the imperialism. The real anti-imperialist aspirations belong to the masses of people the manifestation of which is possible only through the peoples' war. Whatever anti-imperialist struggle people waged were soon hijacked by the phoney war whose real intent was to extract political power to native ruling classes. While the scenes of anti-British struggles were being enacted for the 'mother' India of exploiters, Ambedkar busied himself to liberate the other India-the India of the exploited and oppressed.

Oppression of Women

Besides these mainstream forms of exploitation even the subaltern forms like women's exploitation, could not escape his agenda. He viewed them as the most oppressed of all. His approach to the problems was typically that of a liberal democrat constitutionalist. This certainly constrained his articulation of this problem as in many others. This issue will have to be seriously rethought by dalits under the redefinition project. But suffice here to say that at any opportunity, he raised his voice against women's discriminatory situation in the society.

His basic law of social engineering was that the social revolutions must always begin from the standpoint of the most oppressed or the ones on the lowest rung of the society. Right from the days of Mook Nayak and Bahiskrit Bharat, he appears to take cudgels for women. He always involved women in his struggles and tended to give them vanguard positions. For example, about 500 women had marched at the head of the historical procession at Mahad to assert the untouchables' right to drink water from the public tank. He was immensely pained to see the

permanent denial of education and religious rights to women ordained in the Shastras of the Hinduism (*e.g.* Manusmriti). His democratic consciousness never reconciled with any thing lesser than the equality of men and women though its expression was acutely constrained perhaps by his anxieties about the possibilities, so much so that it might even be mistaken as the male centric tactic.

While he asked women to be good mothers so as to shape up their son or to be good wives to their husbands or be a carrier of community's cultural baggage, he did struggle for their equal rights as in the case of Hindu Code Bill. He described sacramental marriages (Mathew, 1991) as polygamy for men and perpetual slavery for women because under no circumstances within that system the latter would get liberty from their husbands, however bad or undesirable they may be. He insisted that women should have the freedom to break this contract.

On Revolution

Revolution, on the face of it, appears to be an anathema to Ambedkar who seems to dread it and instead advocates reforms. But it would be disaster to take it at face value. For, like many other terms, his usage of the term 'revolution' does not bear the same meaning as is in vogue, particularly in Marxist circles. What Ambedkar seems to detest in revolution is the violence. At many places he tends to equate rebellion, revolution and revolt with violence. He also seems to disagree with the method of insurrection. He thought that without mass consciousness being ripe enough for revolutionary change, insurrectionary methods would not succeed.

Moreover, he appears to be sceptical of the justness of revolutions as they invariably represent the triumph of the collective over the individual. It may be attributed to the influence of liberal democracy in which he got his indoctrination in his formative days. Liberal democracy always put an individual on a high pedestal and considered it precious. His concern for the individual is not again doctrinaire but emanates from the value that any and every human being is precious and the belief that alone can act as the best guarantee against the collective tyranny

and totalitarian excesses any time. In the context of the collapse of erstwhile Soviet block, where the totalitarian states that came into being in the name of dictatorship of proletariat and played havoc with people, this human-centric value assumes importance. One needs to be however reminded that even the values do need to have some material bases.

They do not fall from sky. The contradiction between collective and individual has thus to be resolved in the concrete situation. As for Ambedkar, apart from this scepticism, he does not seem to have any dispute with the general aim and object of revolution.

Revolution, inasmuch as it seeks to bring about a fundamental change in the social relations in the society, will always be opposed by the forces of status quo, whose material interests are directly threatened by this change. In corollary, it becomes imperative for the forces of revolution to overcome this resistance whatever be the means. Whereas, the antagonist camp will always project codes of ethics and morality for their tactical defence in face of the onslaught of revolution, the revolutionaries discard them as decadent; for them revolution itself represents the highest value. Being the upsurge of the suppressed ones, revolutions do have a tendency to be bloody, but it is always in response to the resistance of its opponents.

Therefore it is a representation only by the vested interest to associate violence or moral turpitude with revolutions. On the contrary, it would be more logical to say about the revolutionaries that being propelled by an external motivation to deliver mankind from the existing traps at the risk of their own lives; they cannot be bloodthirsty people. The revolutionary violence is almost an inevitability that arises at the instance of the oppressors.

In that sense Marx called "violence as the midwife of history", emphasising its inevitability. It is the inevitability that marks the compulsion of the vast majority of people to resist the antirevolutionary violence of the minority. The prerequisite here is that the revolution truly represents the majority consciousness. If it does not, then the violence of the few exercised with howsoever a lofty objective could transform into its antithesis, fortifying itself against the majority will. In this sense and insofar as the recent

history showed the scepticism that revolutions trample upon individual's rights therefore cannot be dismissed as baseless.

Historically, revolution is the process of identifying and destroying the obstacles in the existing order to take productive forces to the qualitatively next higher level, for the overall progress of human race. The progress achieved by mankind so far is basically due to the qualitative transformation from quantitative continuum that characterises revolutions. The qualitative transformations always need concentrated inputs, akin to latent heat in the case of phase transformation of water. In social transformation it takes the form of revolutionary energy that in turn may manifest into violence. Ambedkar does not neglect the necessity of violence. As he himself said that if dalits wanted to be effective they would need the canons.

It is erroneous to construe that his opposition to violence was idealistic or doctrinaire. Violence was not a taboo for him; it could be practised when it was absolutely necessary. Even his mentor Buddha, who is respected as the greatest apostle of non-violence had the same pragmatic approach towards violence. Ambedkar was not obsessed either with the idea of non-violence or the value of individualism professed by the classical school of liberal democracy. His reservations were against the possibility of the cunning of a few overriding the will of majority as had happened in the case of caste institution. He would hate to see any thing like caste getting institutionalised again. In his scheme of things he therefore was not ready to compromise the value of democracy, the will of majority of people, whatever may be the end.

Ambedkar did not juxtapose reform against revolution, as many people tend to do. He does not reflect comprehension of technicality of dialectical materialism in his usage of these terms. Often his revolution is the violent overthrow of the existing rule and establishment of the new rule. Likewise, he does not seem to mean that reforms will not entail a qualitative transformation. What he certainly means by revolution is the change brought about in a 'big bang' manner. Notwithstanding what Ambedkar said about his own work, revolution does not always entail a 'big bang'; it is not a point concept as mistakenly regarded in common parlance, but a line concept. Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural

Revolution may be a good example of this. There could be many bits of work, which contributes to taking society to a qualitatively higher rung in the ladder of progress that qualify to be the revolutionary work. The qualitative change itself occurs over a discrete time horizon and not a moment. The moment that marks out transformation of power and looks like a 'big bang', alone is not the revolution. The particular phase of history puts constraints on the kind of changes that can be conceived in its womb. Some one dreaming of a socialist revolution in the slave society would only at best be a daydreamer; a romanticist but he cannot be a revolutionary. Likewise, certain phase of history demands a lot of quantitative preparation before a revolutionary change can be planned for. Ambedkar largely reflects these kinds of concerns while dealing with the issue of revolution. He did not see Indian situation ripe enough for any revolutionary change. Any change without resolution of the caste question, according to him, would not only be detrimental to dalits but also be an extremely short-lived.

The importance of Ambedkar's work can be gauged in relation to contemporary social situation and its transitional social context. Indian society was ridden with a peculiar brand of feudalism, the most prominent feature of which was caste. Caste had incapacitated over 15 per cent of its population and maintained them at the subhuman level. The large part of the balance population also suffered the degradation in a varying degree. This decadent institution had far outlived its minimal utility and as a result for centuries kept Indian society in a fossilised form. It served the material needs of a handful of people but all perceived varying stakes in the system on account of its hierarchical structure and faithfully practised it because they internalised it as their *Dharma* ordained by none other than God.

The possible exception in generic terms were dalits who were placed at the lowest rung of the caste ladder and had hardly anything to their share. However, in particular terms only a few castes from the Dalit castes, who did not have any specific caste profession and hence little stake in the system and consequently who as the general workmen of villages had better exposure to the changing urban life than any one else came out of the hegemony

of Brahmins to articulate the challenge to the system. The hierarchy among dalits however prevented them to come together and consequently this challenge had to be articulated caste by caste. Capitalism that took root in India in big cities also had struck compromise with the caste institution like its harbingers, the British imperialism. It was an arduous task, as it still is, to conceive a model for this struggle and still more difficult to build.

During the colonial times for various reasons these struggles had germinated largely in Maharashtra and Southern states where the social structure reflected sharper polarisation between dalits and balance society. Ambedkar's advent in the Indian sociopolitical scene marked their zenith. It articulated its attack on Brahminism and capitalism that accepted its alliance, focused its organisation on dalits and gave a clarion call for annihilation of castes for achieving the ultimate aim of society based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity to provide wider umbrella for all progressive forces to work. It reflects the distinct historical need to democratise Indian society without which it was bound to suffer constriction of its productive forces. This work had to have large content in the sociocultural realm; it is a credit to Ambedkar's acumen that he gave it a political dimension.

It had to be approached as reform. Ambedkar clearly found the talks of communist revolution as out of phase with the history although he never fully accepted the tenets of historical materialism as he thought it negatived human ingenuity and carried it through a predetermined channel. He insisted that India did not provide congenial soil for germination of class-consciousness because of castes. Their annihilation therefore constituted the first task in the revolutionary agenda. It is unfortunate that many communist revolutionaries still parrot the same characterisation of his work as in years back their predecessors proclaimed using the spoon fed theories from the West.

One day it is hoped that the contributions of all the caste struggles to democratisation of Indian society would be restored as a native revolutionary heritage by these well meaning people. Till then it will always sound puerile to pigeonhole the historical work as reform or revolution merely on the basis of syntax and not the content. However, it is much more unfortunate for

Ambedkarite dalits to deny themselves the credit for this historical contributions by dissociating from the revolutionary agenda, mistakenly thinking that it something alien to them. Effectively, not only they are denying themselves a historical opportunity to contribute to revolution but also delaying their own emancipation.

Dalits have to rethink their position vis a vis revolution. Ambedkar's dream of a society based on liberty, equality and fraternity cannot be realised except through revolution. They will have to understand Ambedkar's life and mission only from this perspective. His contribution to Indian revolution lies in the fact that he tried to comprehend Indian reality independently and tried to contribute to the resolution of its contradictions in his own way. Indian history held out the gauntlet of fossilised Indian feudalism for so long to the Indian revolutionaries but every one conveniently wished it away, initially as a superstructural matter that would disappear automatically when the material base is revolutionised and now after seven decades as a problem belonging to both structure and superstructure, that could be solved through revolutionary practice. It still lacks the clarity and courage to hold the bull by horn.

Ambedkar did not confuse issues, he saw clearly that the annihilation of caste will have to be consciously worked for before taking up any revolutionary project. He went beyond and found out the institutional base of castes in the Indian village whose economic support lay in the land-relations and caste division of labour. But, unlike many communists who still use the stereotype of land reform—a slogan of land to the tiller as the only revolutionary programme, he did not hamper on it because he knew that firstly it was economically impossible to satisfy the land hunger of the landless in the country, secondly the likely transformation of landless to a marginal farmer through land reforms was unlikely to solve the problems of dalits and thirdly, as the later empirical data showed, contrary to expectations the land reforms could aggravate the problem of caste. Instead, he proposed nationalisation of land and co-operativisation of farming.

He realised the necessity of detaching substantial village population from land and absorbing it into the industrial sector that was to be mainly under State sector. Even in retrospect, these

points could have constituted a viable agenda for democratic revolution. As one naxalite scholar—(Ashok Kumar, 1995) perceptively puts it, for having independently seen the question of annihilation of castes linked with the question of land one could unhesitatingly call Ambedkar as the torchbearer of the people's democratic revolution.

'Ambedkar' as Thinker

Dalits are never tired of projecting Ambedkar as the greatest of all the leaders. That unfortunately smacks of sectarian attitude and of their blind devotion to him. They need to understand that the measure of greatness of any person could only be her / his contribution to better the human situation, in terms of correct understanding of its ailment and contribution to cure it. What Ambedkar did could be seen in relation to the broad five currents in Indian politics of his times:

- The Reformists current that wanted to bring about development on the western pattern, possibly with the support of British imperialism,
- Congress, that represented Indian capital and which demanded self-rule under the domination of British imperialism,
- The Terrorist Nationalists who had taken up arms in their fight for freedom against British imperialism,
- The Communists who were trying to implant Bolshevik revolution in India, and
- The Muslim League which opened up a separatist front of Muslims.

All of them scarcely reflected an understanding of the Indian situation. For instance, none showed even a cursory concern about the problems of one fourth of their countrymen who were forced to live worse than animals as ordained by their decadent religion. It was indeed surprising that although all craved for self-rule from the British, none concerned with the caste-system which basically was responsible in pushing the country repeatedly into slavery. None seemed to attempt an objective analysis of either the history or the present of this country. It could circumstantially be said that their motivations came from their narrow class-caste interests. These movements were motivated by the desire of an abstract freedom for country and a refusal to see the concrete slavery of their own people. Granted that the problems before the country were really intricate, still no one would dare say that the need for democratisation was in anyway subordinate.

The real people's movement in the country was required to wage simultaneous war against imperialism, internal compradore bourgeoisie, landlords and Brahminism. It was only Ambedkar who clearly indicated this requirement. In this light, he was certainly ahead of all others. His own bitter experiences with untouchability had stood him in good stead in seeing this more clearly than any other. He strove to build his movement along this understanding but unfortunately it was neither in his power to deal comprehensively with all the issues, nor was there an ideological and programmatic clarity required therefore. He inevitably had to focus his attention on dalits who were the worst victims of this multifaceted oppression. It was the misfortune of Indian history that this struggle progressed in a constricted manner and eventually got dissolved into regressive statist politics. It reflected both the limitation of Ambedkar as well the situational compulsion on him.

The anti-caste movements before Ambedkar were mainly welfare oriented. Some wanted a higher rank for their own caste in the caste hierarchy and some taking the inferior culture of their caste to be the reason for their suffering, aimed at improving the same. Mahatma Phuley's movement was an exception to this trend insofar as it attempted to unite the Sudra and Ati-Sudra castes against the exploitation by the parasitic castes of Shetjis (capitalists) and Bhatjis (priests). While Ambedkar accepted the lineage/inheritance of this movement and held Phuley in greatest esteem as his one of the three *Gurus*, he went beyond to declare annihilation of caste to be the object of his movement in the direction of the goal of 'liberty, equality and fraternity'. In the historical context it certainly was a radical step. He rightly diagnosed that the caste system is basically sustained by the peculiar economic constitution of the Indian village of which the land relations were the main features. Towards breaking this link

he toyed with an idea of separate settlement for dalits at one time and at another exhorted them to leave villages for cities.

He had clearly understood that castes stood on multiple props, *viz.*, the religio-cultural relations, feudal relations in village setting of which land relations constituted the crux and the sociopolitical nexus with the State. Annihilation of castes thus needed destruction of all of them. He soon realised the necessity of political power for this multi-fronged attack. Even to bring about the residual change in the belief system either through the cultural or religious route, he stressed the necessity of political power. In this way, for the first time he brought the problem of untouchability and caste out of the confines of culture to the political agenda.

Unfortunately, this political agenda got lost into the maze of parliamentary politics that soon became be-all-end-all with Dalit leaders. Even during Ambedkar's times the economic aspects of the problem remained largely untouched giving the impression to his followers as though they did not count. In the overall context it can be seen that they could not be as easily dealt with as the religio-cultural and political aspects of the problem. Moreover, it meant direct confrontation with the State for which Ambedkar was certainly not prepared. Alternately, the feudal relations in villages could be destroyed only if the private ownership of land is abolished and co-operativisation of farming is introduced. He thought, this structural change could be effected through the Constitution. It was a folly that he would soon realise when even as the 'chief architect' of the Constitution he failed so much as to bring this point on the agenda of the Constituent Assembly.

CONCEPTION OF AN IDEAL

Babasaheb Ambedkar envisioned his ideal in the famous three principles: liberty, equality and fraternity. They were the basis for the ideal society of his conception. He denied that he had adopted them from the French Revolution. He said he had derived them from the teachings of Buddha. These principles were the clarion call of the French Revolution but later became the ideological props of the liberal bourgeoisie in Europe. Since Marx had ridiculed these principles as the fantasy of the bourgeois society, many

people tended to stereotype Ambedkar as the petty-bourgeois liberal democrat. As according to Ambedkar the source of these principles is different from the French Revolution, familiar to Marx, there is a prima facie scope to argue that Marx's ridicule does not apply to him. His conception of these principles is indeed substantially different from that associated with the liberal bourgeoisie. Actually, what Marx refers to are the slogans of liberty and equality of the bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

There, 'liberty' is the liberty to contract and 'equality' refers to equality in market. Ambedkar insists that the conception of the ideal society ought to have them all the three together. Absence of any would not be acceptable to him. The ideal society of his dream could only be seen within a kind of spiritual frame. It would be interesting to compare this society with the communist society of Marx's conception. Marx reached his inference following the dialectical track of historical materialism. In Ambedkar' case it was just his vision. Inevitably, he had to attribute the origin of them to some spiritual source.

For Ambedkar they meant to denote the State of society sans exploitation and with an emotive ambience of fellow feeling. It was beyond him to describe this State further in concrete terms and much so to indicate the forms of struggle to reach it. Known for his obsession with pragmatism and belief that any definitive laws could not bind the flow of human history, he would avoid the speculative construction of this distant stage of human society.

Not even Marx could describe what his dream communist society would be like beyond that it would be freed of the familiar contradictions. It essentially reflected a contradiction between human desire and material reality. It would be disaster to derive the meaning of this ideal State of Ambedkar's conception from what he did. He left that to posterity to decide as per their circumstances. But, rationally there could be little doubt that the vision of Ambedkar can only be realised in the communist society of Marx's conception where most (not all) of the contradictions in human society would have been resolved.

Dalits ought to internalise this vision and strive for its realisation. Ambedkar had a radical enough interpretation of his principles of liberty, equality and fraternity so as to feel inadequacy

even in Marxism. He said that Marxism supported only equality. He was in need of a body of thought that would give equal importance to all these three principles. He met it with a convenient conceptualisation of religion. It is paradoxical that a person who is rational enough not to bind the posterity with his vision volitionally binds himself with what is said more than 25 centuries before.

It is natural to find ideals better articulated in spiritual spheres but it is equally true that these dream worlds are incapable to provide any clue for their realisation on the earth except for their pet prescription to ignore the material reality and imagine it happened in the mind. They run away from the fact that the evil humans suffer from are the attributes of the divisions in human society, and their abolition essentially calls for struggles by the sufferers against those who perpetrate sufferings. Howsoever, inherently rational the religion may be or radical its interpretation may be it cannot fully escape these limitations.

It can be seen in relation to Buddhism handed down by Babasaheb Ambedkar with his radical interpretation. Notwithstanding the familiar quibbling around the Dhamma and Dhamma among dalits, what remained of Buddhism with them is what would happen to any religion. It is a different question whether Marxism embodied Ambedkar's ideals or not but it is certain that they are neither realisable neither through any kind of constitutional acrobatics nor through any religious practice.

State

Ambedkar's conception of State reflects some amount of autonomy from the hegemony of the ruling classes. It is why he expected it to act as per the constitutional structure and endeavoured to incorporate the pro-Dalit bias into the Constitution. He must have realised the true nature of it, the boundaries of the autonomy and basic class bias of the State, when he actually reached not only the Constituent Assembly but also became the chairman of its Drafting Committee.

In his anxiety to secure some provisions in favour of dalits, he accepted to be the 'hack' to write what was acceptable to the ruling caste-class representatives. He must have thought that

within the given constraints he had done a good job of making the Constitution responsive to the needs of the downtrodden people. Indeed, many of the provisions in the directive principles and elsewhere apparently bear clear imprint of his zeal and owe their existence to him.

But, even they had to be within the strategic space provided by the rulers. His realisation of the folly was near complete when he had to burst out in utter dejection at its ineffectual implementation, that he would be the first man to burn the Constitution as it was of no good to any one. He was inaccurate, as the Constitution had proved good enough to the upper caste-class combine who had hegemonised complete political space in post-1947 India. He attributed it to the 'devils' in the Congressmen who had occupied the constitutional 'temple' he and others had built.

Ambedkar could not reach the point of understanding that the State is a mere instrument in the hands of the ruling classes to coerce the ruled ones into submission to their interests. Until the downtrodden themselves become the ruling class, they cannot expect the State to do good to them. Whatever good that appears to come to their share, in ultimate balance accrues to the other side in multiple measure.

The post-1947 State, which has never tired of propagandising its concern for dalits and poor, has in fact been singularly instrumental in aggravating the caste problem with its policies. Even the apparently progressive policies in the form of Land Ceiling Act, Green Revolution, Programme of Removal of Poverty, Reservations to Dalits in Services and Mandal Commission etc. have resulted against their professed objectives.

The effect of the Land Ceiling Act, has been in creating a layer of the middle castes farmers which could be consolidated in caste terms to constitute a formidable constituency. In its new incarnation, this group that has traditionally been the immediate upper caste layer to dalits, assumed virtual custody of Brahminism in order to coerce Dalit landless labourers to serve their socioeconomic interests and suppress their assertive expression in the bud. The Green Revolution was the main instrument to introduce capitalisation in agrarian sector.

It reinforced the innate hunger of the landlords and big farmers for land as this State sponsored revolution produced huge surplus for them. It resulted in creating geographical imbalance and promoting unequal terms of trade in favour of urban areas. Its resultant impact on dalits has been far more excruciating than that of the Land Ceiling Act.

The much publicised programme for Removal of Poverty has aggravated the gap between the heightened hopes and aspirations of dalits on one hand and the feelings of depravation among the poorer sections of non-dalits in the context of the special programmes especially launched for upliftment of dalits. The tension that ensued culminated in increasingly strengthening the caste—based demands and further aggravating the caste-divide. The reservations in services for dalits, notwithstanding its benefits, have caused incalculable damage in political terms. Reservations created hope, notional stake in the system and thus dampened the alienation; those who availed of its benefit got politically emasculated and in course consciously or unconsciously served as the props of the system.

The context of scarcity of jobs provided ample opportunity to reactionary forces to divide the youth along caste lines. Mandal Commission, that enthused many progressive parties and people to upheld its extension of reservation to the backward castes, has greatly contributed to strengthen the caste identities of people. Inasmuch as it empowers the backward castes, actually their richer sections, it is bound to worsen the relative standing of dalits in villages.

Thus, the State, its welfare mask notwithstanding, has viciously and consistently acted against dalits and poor people. It is a complete contra-evidence to hopes of Ambedkar who strove to maximise and make use of the autonomous space of the State for the benefits of the have-nots, particularly dalits. It is one thing to assume autonomous space but quite another to equate it with caste-class neutrality. Unfortunately, the Dalit political behaviour always reflected this erroneous notion of caste-class neutrality of the State. It has already caused great damage to the Dalit interests. The radical Ambedkar might have strategy to use State for Dalit cause but would never see it as caste-class neutral.

Socialism

Despite his ambivalence and reservations about the emphasis on the economic dimension in socialism, Ambedkar broadly remained a socialist. Some scholars do find little scope for suspecting his socialist credentials because of his disapproval of Russell's criticism of property, his non-acceptance of Marxian formulations and his placement of social issues higher than the economic and political issues. He called the complaint against love of money as 'philosophy of sour grapes' and ridiculed materialism as 'the ideology of pigs'. This impression is moreover strengthened by his reservations to accept the economic interpretation of history. But, in all fairness it may be said that what he appears to mean is the integrative consideration of all the factors that are needed for any society to be based on liberty, equality and fraternity. Notwithstanding his variant conception, there should not be any doubt about his socialistic antecedents.

His conception of socialism also underwent evolution. Once he had stated that there was hardly any difference between his socialism and communism. As such, his disagreement with the communists was about the means and not about the aim. He warns the communists that the classless society can emerge only after the emergence of a casteless society. It implies that his quarrel with the then communists was over the stages of revolution. In the 1920s and 30s, these people had borrowed the communist dogma and parroted class struggle in utter disregard of the reality.

Ambedkar, on the contrary, was firmly rooted in it. They believed that the soviet Russian model of revolution was importable for bringing about a socialist revolution into India whereas Ambedkar realistically postulated that unless the consciousness of the working class was congenial for revolution, there was no question of it materializing. And, unless the caste system is destroyed, creation of the pro-revolution consciousness was out of question. His annoyance with the Bombay communists was largely because of their dogmatic behaviour. It is unfortunate that the ideal of classlessness that was latent in his agenda never really surfaced during his lifetime.

Ambedkar relies on the concept of 'State' for materialisation of his conception of socialism. His conception of State is largely

idealist. He wanted the State to intervene in the economic structure and its monitoring. He wanted to constitutionalise this State intervention so that it would not be subject to change any time with the whims of simple majority vote in the legislation.

Ambedkar who taught, "The lost rights cannot be regained by making appeals or requests to the robbers; it needs struggles"; did not say anything on how the oppressed people will get such strength as to create the constitutional provisions, that would put the class structure upside down. On behalf of his party—Scheduled Caste Federation, he had submitted a draft for the future constitution to the Constituent Assembly for the independent India. It was published later as "States and Minorities". This book has really aided students in understanding some aspects of his conception of socialism.

Nevertheless, one cannot afford to forget the constraints placed by the context in which it was written. The context was that he had failed to get into the Constituent Assembly and was therefore anxious to strike a feasible and still radical note that could find the support of the vast majority of the have-nots which might then create some pressure either for its inclusion in the Constitution or for his entry into the Constituent Assembly. For some years, during the preceding turbulence of negotiations for transfer of power, he found himself totally marginalised. Notwithstanding the probable limitations of this draft, its provisions in operational terms were still very radical. The main provisions are:

- All important industries and services shall belong to the nation.
- Insurance industry shall be in public sector and insurance will be compulsory for every citizen.
- Private sector and entrepreneurs shall have a role in the economy but it shall not be dominating.
- Nationalisation of land and promotion of cooperative farming on a collective principle.

These provisions, if implemented, would have gone a long way towards supporting democratic revolution in the country. It would have limited inequality and exploitation in the economic and political sphere. Politically, it would have had far-reaching

impact. Ambedkar till the end could not completely remove the Fabian influence (which he might have gathered while in England) on him. In his times, particularly before World War II, few people in India were well versed in Marxist philosophy. The knowledge of Marxism seldom exceeded some broad principles and 'Stalin's dictatorship' painted by imperialists or the 'revolt of the workers, the insurgency of the poor. Ambedkar also does not seem to have gone very far from this point. Without indulging into the debate of ifs and buts, there should not be any iota of doubt that the ideal society of his conception could materialise only through socialism.

Democracy

Ambedkar had unshakeable faith in democracy. In his conception of an exploitation-less society, democracy has an extraordinary role. Democracy means 'one person, one vote'; and 'one vote, one value'. Democracy means empowerment of any person for participating in the process of decision-making relating to her/him, democracy means liberty, equality and fraternity—Ambedkar's definition of democracy had such a tone. Because he presided over making of the Constitution and is being projected as its chief architect, there is a misunderstanding that parliamentary democracy is what he wanted. But nothing could be farther from the truth than this. He himself spoke against parliamentary democracy. For instance, he defined parliamentary democracy as "voting by the people in favour of their owners and handing over the rights of ruling over themselves". This provides a glimpse of the expanse of his ideal, which certainly was much beyond the Indian Constitution or any common place understanding about him.

His conception of democracy appears to be purely people oriented. He showed that the bookish concepts of equality are detrimental to the disabled sections of society in the prevailing social setting and proposed a fundamental change in the concept of equality. It envisaged complete abolition of inequality. His principle of positive discrimination is based on this very concept of equality. But the operational aspects of this concept involved the need for some kind of autonomous institution, which was met by 'State' and 'religion'. It is necessary to stress that his greatness lies in the radicality of his conceptions, his vision of a human

society sans any kind of exploitation; not in the remedies or apparatus he proposed in the circumstances prevailing in his time.

ASPECTS OF THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS

In the context of strategy, some of Ambedkar's contributions are really noteworthy. He brought the struggle against Brahminism into the political battlefield. He inferred that without political power the social and religious structures will collapse and motivated his followers to capture political power. But his conception of political power being acutely constrained by the parliamentary framework where bargaining is the predominant medium of securing political power, inevitably it made way for all kinds of aberrations and perversities to creep in. The prevailing politics being the game of possibilities, he was soon sucked into its vortex. Politics came to dominate the other aspects of his personality. Slowly, the impact of politics started becoming visible everywhere. This phase significantly contributed to multiplication of his inconsistencies out of tactical imperatives. Dalits have taken this legacy of parliamentary politics very seriously, almost as the be all and end all of their political being. It may be, interesting to probe how much damage this kind of political orientation inflicted on the Dalit movement.

It is altogether a different question whether Ambedkar had any other alternative to parliamentary politics for political practice. It may be argued that in the context of his resources, adversarial environment and to some extent his personal limitations, he had none. Even if it is taken as correct, it should not be forgotten that it was a matter of strategy and tactic that presuppose contextual variables: it cannot be taken as the lasting value.

The fundamental source of most of Ambedkar's political thoughts and action is his conception of State and religion, that he had adopted as the extraneous instruments to reconcile the state of flux of things and the necessity of order in them. It is necessary to understand that both, the State as well as religion, are the products of the evolutionary process of the human society. There is nothing inevitable about them. Marx took State as the instrument of coercion in the hands of ruling classes and religion

as the opium of the masses. Dalits have a long experience of nearly five decades with the so-called welfare State of Ambedkar's design. What does it say? Does the State side with them in their conflict with the landlords? Does it come to their rescue when every day three or four of their daughters are raped?

Does it come to save the shame of their women when they are paraded naked in the streets? Does it take their side when they come in conflict with landlords, moneylenders in villages or with management in the modern settings? Does it really ensure they get their dues as provided in the Constitution or punish the defaulting management for noncompliance? To all of such questions the answer could only be in the negative. It is not a matter of 'devils occupying the temples' as Ambedkar lamented seeing the people occupying the Constitutional positions. The State possesses the characteristics of its master class. In India the upper caste capitalists, landlords, top bureaucrats, etc. being the ruling class, the State can never have saints who would favour dalits. It is a fact that even the government by a Dalit party like the BSP could not transform it into a Dalit State.

Religion, in Ambedkar's conception is necessary to maintain the moral order of the society. It may be interesting to examine to what extent it conforms to this idealistic expectation. Buddhism, which undoubtedly is the most rational of all the religions, does not have any evidence of having created over its near millennium long tenure in India such an order of the society which could claim liberty, equality and fraternity of Ambedkar's conception. Ambedkar's argument that the Bhikku Sangha in Buddhism was the prototype of this kind of society becomes invalid once we call into question the role of Sangha in the production process.

Before that, the order that envisaged nostalgically to recreate the value of the vanishing *Gana Rajya* in microcosm against the evil of rising monarchies, cannot just sublimate to the era of capitalism without being an alley of exploiters unless it transforms itself in some way as a catalyst for the revolution. The moral tenets of Buddhism likewise cannot submerge the lure of surplus extraction, that is its dominating ethos. If at all, it may help it become more pronounced by weakening the resistance of the exploited masses. As we empirically see, the Buddhism of his

conception could not produce even a trace of morality in its adherents. On the contrary, for the masses it presents the distorted, if not inverted, worldview; it orients them to look inwards for their misery and be blind to the reality that some one exploits him. He could certainly derive mental peace and pleasure but it is a state of an intoxicated mind. Keeping in mind the causal links in Ambedkar's adoption of these instruments, the redefinition project needs to address these issues afresh.

The strategy of the ruling class always stresses on diversion of peoples' attention from their real problems and their disarmament—both in physical and ideological terms. They invariably have a multilayered strategy in place for this purpose. The vanguard parties of the ruling classes open up sentimental fronts and attempt to divert the attention of people as their real problems get aggravated. Secondly, their time-tested methods of adulterating radical ideas with the masses are always in operation. Towards this end, we see all the ruling parties vying with each other in co-opting Ambedkar. 'Ambedkar' represents a potentially dangerous ideological weapon in the hands of the Indian proletariat and so the ruling class will be hell bent on blunting its edge. They will do everything to eulogise him not only for wooing dalits for their immediate electoral gains but also to neutralise him as the radical ideological force by propagandising a distorted version of the latter. Dalits will have to exercise vigil over their ideological assets even after redefining Ambedkar.

CONCLUSION

For at least over last five decades Dalits have devotedly followed Ambedkar as their ideal, as a virtual God and zealously practised, as they claim, his teachings. Their social being could be seen to be totally imbued with what they call Ambedkarism—the veritable science of their emancipation. If it is true, and no one would deny it is not, it should be pertinent to ask why despite this flawless following of Ambedkar they continue to be in a pathetic state in every sense. Barring a handful dalits in the government and public sector services and of course politicians, they continue to occupy the lowest rung in the social as well as economic hierarchy of Indian society. Their politics,

notwithstanding the media hype, gauged by the measure of general empowerment, continues to be in shambles. Over these decades, their relative situation either shows stagnation or decline. The insinuation to relate this State with their faith in Ambedkar itself would be distasteful for many dalits. But, it is vital for ones that are committed to their liberation to squarely face the facts and dispassionately find out where the rot lay.

Generally, beyond the first burst of anger in reaction to this question, one would face the defensive arguments to discount this relationship. Typically, they tend to attribute their miserable situation to the lack of competent leadership after Babasaheb Ambedkar, to the educated dalits who they think have become Dalit Brahmins and have deserted the community; and sometimes to the people themselves for their extreme self- centredness. Sometimes, the finger is raised at the high caste hegemony that has neutralised the impact of the Constitution that Ambedkar created. Some, particularly the leadership, even would dismiss the basic premise itself that there is something wrong with the Dalit movement.

They might even go so far as to claim net achievements indicating the prosperity of themselves or some others of their like. More sober may argue that what is seen is the transition state. Conceding them all some amount of validity even would not erase the stark fact that the general situation of the vast majority of Dalit masses remains still alarmingly pathetic.

Externalisation of the reasons for this state has not helped dalits wee bit. The time has come for dalits to self-critically see whether anything was wrong with their ideology and / or with their practice thereof.

Reviewing the post-Ambedkar Dalit movement at some significant milestones, one finds a queer underscoring behaviour, believed to be in accordance with the teachings of Babasaheb Ambedkar, that is certainly incongruent with the essence of what he taught. This dichotomy between the essential Ambedkar and the 'Ambedkar' in the faith of Dalit masses—the icon of Ambedkar, comes out as the problematic in this review. In relation to almost every aspect of his teaching there emerged an icon that represented varying amount of distortion.

Insofar as they constituted the ideology that gripped the masses, these icons can be seen to be at the root of the Dalit pathos. Among the myriad sources for these icons, Ambedkar himself might come out as the major source. Because, even a myth can not sustain for long without some material base. The icons of Ambedkar thus could be linked to some such bases, howsoever tenuous, within his own life. The rationalist in Ambedkar never hesitated to change his opinions and behaviour if the facts so warranted. They appear to be inconsistencies to the ones who see it sans context.

His distance from the focus of control in his sociopolitical environment, the vastly varying target audience (ranging from the Englishmen to the illiterate dalits) to whom he had to communicate, the exigency to respond to the dynamics of communities set in motion by the pre-independence politics, his anxiety to accomplish as many gains for dalits as he could in his life time, the exigencies for 'short' actions at the expense of 'long' vision inevitably led to mark patterns that could support array of behaviours. The first to take advantage of it were his own lieutenants for serving their personal ambitions that set the trends of distortion of Ambedkar in the minds of gullible Dalit masses.

The ruling classes that always look for the grounds to divide masses had severally reinforced this distortion and accelerated fragmentation of dalits in every field. They, along with willing collaboration of Dalit politicians and emerging elite, promoted and sustained the particular icons of Ambedkar that would prevent political coalescence of dalits and suck them into the vortex of parliamentary politics in order to bring the establishment much needed legitimacy. Dalits failed to note this cunning and let themselves flow in the currents of confusion the ruling classes deliberately created. Today, with increasing political crises the ruling classes seem vying with each other in co-opting Ambedkar, as though that may be their last chance of survival. If dalits stood their grounds well, that might have proved to be their last act.

But, unfortunately dalits are giving them new leases of life by blinding themselves to the reality. Not only that they have not resisted these ruling class machinations but on the contrary they are curiously seen to swell the cadres of these castiest, communalist

and anti-poor groups and parties. These parties who openly profess the ideology of Hindu revivalism and represent all that is decadent in Indian tradition show the temerity to project Ambedkar among their ideologies. Apart from the reasons of security that propel Dalit youth into their fold, the compradore behaviour of Dalit elite certainly has influenced the phenomenon. What is common in all the attempts by the ruling classes is to sap 'Ambedkar' of its rebellious content.

It is advantageous for them to show that he was the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, committed to parliamentary democracy and opposed to any ideology that propagates violence or revolution. He is projected to favour gradual change implying that dalits should patiently wait and strive persuasively to better their own lives. He is projected as the Bodhisatva that inspires *nirvana*—the State of total detachment from worldly matters. All these images have caused significant damage to the emancipatory struggles of dalits.

Some of these images might be the purposeful and blatant disfiguring of Ambedkar but some of them represent genuine dilemma arising from Ambedkar's own stands on various issues. From the viewpoint of the comprehensive pro-people change in the present historical phase a democratic revolution is an imperative. The motive force for this revolution ought to sprout from dalits. The history provides a strong testimony that any radical movement in the country could be sustained by dalits and tribals at its base. Ambedkar as a symbol for Dalit aspirations holds a key to the barrage that has so far bound the revolutionary upsurge in India below the alarming levels. If one concedes that Ambedkar's framework is going to haunt revolutionary commitment till the Indian Democratic Revolution actually happens and that Ambedkar represents the ideological weaponry in the hands of dalits who along with other oppressed people are going to be the axis of this revolution, then one would clearly see the need to redefine Ambedkar in radical terms commensurate with this purpose.

Many aspects of confusion with regard to the facts could be cleared with rational interpretation of his thoughts. But much might need the logical extrapolation of his basic thinking which

for some reason appears to have settled in erroneous forms. As he himself showed the way in the case of his redefinition of Buddha's Dhamma, dalits will have to undertake this task, for giving themselves a powerful ideology. Their future as a social group almost hinges on this task. There are enough clues left behind by Ambedkar himself that point to this need.

There is no doubt that he was frustrated at the end of his life seeing the undesired aftermath of his lifelong struggle. He had to lament over the betrayal of the educated dalits in whom he had seen the crusaders of his mission. He had to weep with remorse that he could not do anything for his people in the villages. He had to disown the Constitution for working on which he had cut short his life at least by a few years. He had to swallow the frustration of not being able to pilot the Constitution of his conception (States and Minorities). He had to regret the anti-people State that emerged in republican India. He obviously lacked the analytical tools to see through the reasons for these happenings. His excessive religiosity and spirituality at the fag end of his life perhaps could be taken as the manifestation of this frustration.

The social engineer could only be busy with problems; he is unlikely to come to grip with the design defects in the system. Almost every thing that Ambedkar pinned his hopes on can be found today in antithetical shambles. His educational society, his vision of Buddhism, the political party of his conception, the social reforms could be some of the examples. These tragic aftermaths also would denote the necessity of a critical review of Ambedkar's thoughts if they were to be used as the ideology to further the Dalit movement towards its logical end. If this process is sincerely followed, there cannot be any doubt that this 'redefined Ambedkar' would be a revolutionary icon, organically linking the Dalit struggle to the revolutionary struggle in the world. It will truly globalize the Dalit struggle.

3

Dr. Ambedkar's Political Career

Between 1941 and 1945, he published a large number of highly controversial books and pamphlets, including *Thoughts on Pakistan*, in which he criticized the Muslim League's demand for a separate Muslims state of Pakistan. With *What Congress and Gandhi have Done to the Untouchables*, Ambedkar intensified his attacks on Gandhi and the Congress, charging them with hypocrisy. In his work *Who were the Sudras?*, Ambedkar attempted to explain the formation of the Sudras *i.e.* the lowest caste in hierarchy of Hindu caste system. He also emphasised that how Sudras are separate from Untouchables. Ambedkar oversaw the transition of his political party into the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, although it performed poorly in the elections held in 1946 for the Constituent Assembly of India. In writing a sequel to *Who were the Sudras?* in 1948, Ambedkar lambasted Hinduism in the *The Untouchables: a Thesis on the Origins of Untouchability*:

> *Ambedkar was also critical of Islam and its practices in South Asia. While justifying the Partition of India, he condemned practices of Child-Marriage in Muslim society, as well as the mistreatment of women. He also condemned the Caste practices carried out by Muslims in South Asia. He was also critical of slavery in Muslim communities. He said:*
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> *"No words can adequately express the great and many evils of polygamy and concubinage, and especially as a source of misery to a Muslim woman." "Take the caste system. Everybody infers that Islam must be free from slavery and caste. While slavery existed, much of its support was derived from Islam and Islamic countries. While the prescriptions by the Prophet regarding the*

just and humane treatment of slaves contained in the Koran are praiseworthy, there is nothing whatever in Islam that lends support to the abolition of this curse. But if slavery has gone, caste among Musalmans has remained."

He wrote that Muslim Society is "even more full of social evils than Hindu Society is" and criticized Muslims for sugar-coating their sectarian Caste System with euphemisms like "brotherhood". He also criticized the discrimination against the Arzal classes among Muslims who were regarded as "degraded", as well as the oppression of women in Muslim society through the oppressive *purdah* system. He alleged that while Purdah was also practised among Hindus, only in Muslims was it sanctioned by religion. He criticized their fanaticism to Islam on the grounds that their literalist interpretations of Islamic doctrine made their society very rigid and impermeable to change. He further wrote that Indian Muslims have failed to reform their society unlike Muslims in other countries like Turkey.

In a "communal malaise," both groups [Hindus and Muslims] ignore the urgent claims of social justice. While he was extremely critical of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the communally divisive strategies of the Muslim League, he argued that Hindus and Muslims should segregate and the State of Pakistan be formed, as ethnic nationalism within the same country would only lead to more violence. He cited precedent with historical events like the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Czechoslovakia to bolster his views regarding the Hindu-Muslim communal divide.

However, he questioned as to whether the need for Pakistan was sufficient and it might be possible to resolve Hindu-Muslim differences in a less drastic way. He wrote that Pakistan must "justify its existence" accordingly. Since other countries such as Canada also have had communal issues with the French and English and have lived together, it may not be impossible for Hindus and Muslims to live together.

He warned that the actual implementation of a two state solution would be extremely problematic with massive population transfers and border disputes. This claim was almost prophetic in its realization with the violent Partition of India after independence.

Architect of India's constitution despite his increasing unpopularity, controversial views and intense criticism of Gandhi and the Congress, Ambedkar was by reputation an exemplary jurist and scholar.

Upon India's independence on August 15, 1947, the new Congress-led government invited Ambedkar to serve as the nation's first law minister, which he accepted. On August 29, Ambedkar was appointed chairman of the constitution drafting committee, charged by the Assembly to write free India's constitution. Ambedkar won great praise from his colleagues and contemporary observers for his drafting work.

The text prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination.

Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for women, and also won the Assembly's support for introducing a system of reservations of jobs in the civil services, schools and colleges for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, a system akin to affirmative action.

India's lawmakers hoped to eradicate the socioeconomic inequalities and lack of opportunities for India's depressed classes through this measure, which had been originally envisioned as temporary on a need basis. The constitution was adopted on November 26, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly. Speaking after the completion of his work, Ambedkar said:

Ambedkar resigned from the cabinet in 1951 following the stalling in parliament of his draft of the Hindu Code Bill, which sought to expound gender equality in the laws of inheritance, marriage and the economy. Although supported by Prime Minister Nehru, the cabinet and many other Congress leaders, it received criticism from a large number of parliament members. Ambedkar independently contested an election in 1952 to the lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha but was defeated. He was appointed to the upper house of parliament, the Rajya Sabha in March 1952 and would remain its member until his death.

AMBEDKAR, GANDHI AND CONGRESS

Ambedkar was a fierce critic of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. He was also criticized by his contemporaries and modern scholars for his opposition to Mahatma Gandhi, who had been one of the first Indian leaders to call for the abolition of untouchability and discrimination.

Gandhi had a more positive, arguably romanticised view of traditional village life in India, whereas Ambedkar had a much more negative view. Ambedkar encouraged his followers to leave their home villages, move to the cities and get an education.

Limitations, Criticism and legacy: Most of contemporary sociopolitical leaders across political spectrum joined in condemnation evil social practice of untouchability, many times their priorities on the ground in eliminating these evil practices did not match to expectation of Ambedkar. While it took long time, curse of untouchability and forms of overt discrimination got removed eventually from most of Indian social life over the years.

Structure of Indian Caste system specially so of Hindu's, and their superstitions were so complex and intermingled, that those religions which in principal were not supposed to have caste system, in many instances were practising the same indirectly. While in sharing of food together by different caste people became more common, practice of marriage among same caste and political voting lines based on caste achieved very little change over the years.

The whole situation was so frustrating that while progressive people agreed with his cause, he could not get unanimous and unequivocal support from even all depressed classes at one time. So he could not get enough mileage of vote bank in actual number of parliamentary seats, in post independence era.

Benefits of Governments affirmative action did not reach adequately to affected population due to ever growing population, practices of child labour and child marriage, discrete forms of discrimination, castism among even oppressed classes themselves.

At the same time, some economically poor sections of society got disenchanted because of affirmative action as their castes or

communities were not among selected few. Above factors have been polarising Indian politics, at times, with extreme POVs. This aspect is more of reason in accusing Ambedkar as a controversial and polarizing figure in Indian politics even after his death.

While Ambedkar's supporters argue that he was working to secure Dalit and Backward Caste political rights. Contemporary and modern scholars also questioned Ambedkar's research and point of view regarding origin of the caste system and racial theories.

He acquired sympathy and criticism both about his mass conversion of Buddhism as a political stunt, from his opponents. Ambedkar was also criticised for his intensely anti-Hindu views, though his supporters argue that he was only opposed to "Orthodox Brahminism" rather than to all Hindus. He came in touch with many progressive people belonging to Brahmin and other upper classes.

Because of oppressive traditional caste system many scholars including that of affected castes took a view that Britishers are more even handed in respect of Indian caste system, and continuance of British rule can help in eradicating some of evil practices. This political thought believed that let the social improvement happen first and then only we should go for political independence, and was shared by quite a number of social activists including that of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Ambedkar. So this earned criticism from certain quarters like writer Arun Shourie, who questioned Ambedkar's contributions to the Indian Independence struggle.

His criticism about certain aspects of Islam and Islamic society in India and his favour in form of benefit of affirmative action to limited sections; limited support among many Muslims.

Legacy: Ambedkar's legacy has been long-lasting on modern India. He is widely regarded as the "father of the Indian constitution" for his role in creating the document. His political philosophy has given rise to a large number of Dalit political parties, publications and workers unions that remain active across India, especially in Maharashtra. His promotion of the Indian Buddhist Movement has rejuvenated interest in Buddhist

philosophy in many parts of India. Mass conversion ceremonies have been organized by Dalit activists in modern times, emulating Ambedkar's Nagpur ceremony of 1956.

Cost of Change: However, frequent violent clashes between Dalit groups and orthodox Hindus have occurred over the years. When in 1994 a garland of shoes was hung around a statue of Ambedkar in Mumbai, sectarian violence and strikes paralysed the city for over a week. When the following year similar disturbances occurred, a statue of Ambedkar was destroyed. In addition, some Dalits who converted to Buddhism have rioted against Hindus and desecrated Hindu temples, often incited into doing so by anti-Hindu elements and replacing deities with pictures of Ambedkar.

Humans as the Homo sapience evolved on this planet about 150,000 years before present. Some of the oldest civilizations known in the history of humanity have been dated 10,000 years old. Human Being is a social animal. Social animal has a tendency to govern and to be governed by a set of rules framed by the society itself. There are two fundamental types of human nature. Creative and possessive. Creative humans use human intellect for creative endeavours which enriches human thought; knowledge and wealth thereby contribute to the development of human heritage for the posterity. Possessive people, on the other hand do not believe in the use of human intellect for creative purpose. Rather, they believe in appropriation, amassing and even usurpation of the products of the labour of the creative people.

This type of people posses a strong urge to become the governing class by all means in order to achieve their aims. Lesser the degree of civilization in the society, greater is the probability of succeeding this type of people in becoming the governing class. However, in a more civilized society the creative people can offer resistance to possessive people and try to safeguard their interests. This is a continuous process in the human society. Karl Marx has scientifically analysed this conflict by applying the principles of dialectical materialism to the sphere of social phenomenon and described it as the historical materialism. Slavery, apartheid, gender bias and caste system are the abominable creations of possessive peoples for the exploitation of creative people. These are man

made evils created by man for the exploitation of man. Those, who have raised their voices against these evils and given a relentless fight against the prevailing social order of their times in order to free the creative peoples from the shackles imposed on them have become immortal personalities in the human history.

Some of these great persons are better known as founders of religions. Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ and Guru Nanak for example. Some have become famous as saints as Kabirjee, Ravidasjee and Tukarama. Some have become source of inspiration and guidance to the underprivileged classes as Krantiba Jotiba Phoolay and Periyar Ramaswamy Naicker and some are revered even more than gods as Bharatratna Dr. Bhimrao Ramjee Ambedkar. Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ, Guru Nanak Kabir, Ravidas, Tukarama, Krantiba Jotirao Phoolay, Periyar and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar they all belong to the great class of exalted Homo sapience called as Humanists.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was truly a multifaceted personality. A veritable emancipator of Dalits, a great national leader and patriot, a great author, a great educationist, a great political philosopher, a great religious guide and above all a great humanist without any parallel among his contemporaries. All these facets of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's personality had strong humanistic underpinnings. It is only regrettable that the press in the past as well as the contemporary has projected Ambedkar mainly as a great social rebel and a bitter critic of the Hindu religion. Critics of Dr. Ambedkar have ignored his basic humanistic instincts and strong humanitarian convictions behind his every act or speech through out his life. It is important to trace the origin and consolidation of his humanistic convictions.

Origins of Dr. Ambedkar's Humanistic Convictions: Dr. Ambedkar's father, Subhedar Ramji was a known follower of the Kabirpanth. Many of the Kabir's Dohas are the veritable gems of rationalism and the most daring expressions of the humanitarian beliefs. Dr. Ambedkar's mind was thus deeply imbued with Kabir's philosophy in the childhood days. On passing his matriculation examination, he was felicitated by his teacher and was presented with a copy of a book on the life of Buddha. This gift must have made a profound impact on the mind of young Ambedkar. Dr.

Ambedkar stayed in America, the land of liberty, for his higher studies. There he studied the western liberal thought and the humanitarian philosophy expounded by great thinkers such as Prof. John Dewey, who was also his teacher, John Stuart Mill, Edmund Burke, and Prof. Harold Laski to name a few. The impact of this original thinker on Dr. Ambedkar's mind is evident from the frequent quotations one comes across in his writings and speeches. The contrast between the social milieu which he lived in, and the liberal academic thought he studied could not have resulted in anything but making him an ardent humanist.

Fundamental rights assured to all citizens of our country is a great leap towards establishing the basic human values in the society that was based on graded inequality. As the chairperson of the constitution drafting committee Dr. Ambedkar was instrumental in the incorporation of the principle of fundamental rights in the constitution.

Dr. Ambedkar was a firm believer in the parliamentary democracy. That is why when the fear of fascism represented by Hitler was looming large over the world,

he decided to cooperate with the British government in its fight against the fascism. Because as a humanist he could foresee the dangerous consequences of the victory of the fascism. Today some myopic people criticize Dr. Ambedkar for this. However, by criticizing Dr. Ambedkar on this score, they inadvertently expose their fascist leanings.

A few months before his Mahaparinirvana he embraced Buddhism. It was a great tribute of a great humanist to the greatest humanistic philosophy of Buddha. By initiating millions of his follower in to the Buddhist fold, he asserted his faith in the humanistic values preached by Buddha in alleviating the sufferings of his lot. He thus reached the pinnacle of the humanism by becoming a Bodhisattva.

Ambedkar and his patrons were dealt a humiliating blow by the elections of 1937. There were a total of 1,585 seats in the 11 assemblies in 'British India'. Of these 777 were 'tied'—in the sense that they were to be filled by communal or special representation from Chambers of Commerce, plantations, labour etc. Of the 808 'general' seats, the Congress, which Ambedkar, Jinnah and others denounced from the house tops, won 456. It secured absolute majorities in 5 assemblies—those of Madras, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa. And was the largest single party in 4 others—Bombay, Bengal, Assam and the NWFP.

From the point of view of Ambedkar and the British—who had been holding him up to counter the Congress claim that it represented the harijans as much as any other section of Indian society—worse was the fact that the Congress did extremely well in the seats which had been reserved for harijans. Thirty seats were reserved for harijans in Madras Presidency, the Congress contested 26 and won 26. In Bihar there were 24 reserved seats—in 9 of these Congress candidates were returned unopposed; of the remaining 15 reserved seats, it contested 14, and won 14.

In Bombay of the 15 reserved seats, it secured 1 unopposed, contested 8 and won 5. In the United Provinces there were 20 reserved seats; two of its candidates were returned unopposed; it contested 17 seats and won 16. In Bengal of the 30 reserved seats, it contested 17 and won 6. In the Central Provinces of the 19 reserved seats, it contested 9 and won 5.

The lesson was there for all to see. Reporting to the Viceroy on the result in the Bombay Presidency, the Governor, Lord Brabourne wrote, "Dr. Ambedkar's boast of winning, not only 15 seats which are reserved for the harijans, but also a good many more—looks like being completely falsified, as I feared it would be."

The electorate, including the harijans, may have punctured his claims but there was always the possibility of reviving one's fortunes through politicking and manoeuvres. Efforts of all these elements were focused on the objective of installing non-Congress ministries in Bombay and wherever else this was a possibility. Brabourne reported to the viceroy that Jamnadas Mehta, the finance minister "who is chief minister in all but name", was telling him that the ministry in Bombay would survive motions on the budget and may even get through the motion of no-confidence:

"His calculations are based on the fact that he expects to get the support of the bulk of the Muhammadans, the whole of

Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Party, and of half a dozen or so of those individuals who stood as Congressmen merely to get elected," he reported. But added, "I gather that he is in touch with Ambedkar, who is carrying on negotiations for him, but, as you will find from the next succeeding paragraph, it rather looks to me as if Ambedkar is playing a thoroughly double game, in which case Jamnadas Mehta's hopes are likely to be rudely shattered."

The governor went on to report that he had also had a long conversation with Jinnah, and that Jinnah had told him that, in the event of the ministry being defeated, the Muslim League would be prepared to form a ministry provided they could secure a majority of even two or three in the assembly. "He (*that is, Jinnah*) went on to say that Ambedkar and his party were prepared to back him in this," Brabourne reported, "and that he expected to get the support of ten or a dozen of the so-called Congress MLAs mentioned above.

He made it quite clear to me that they would not support the present ministry. The governor was sceptical about the claims and assurances of all of them. He wrote, "It is, of course, quite impossible to rely on anything that Jinnah tells me, and the only thing for me to do is to listen and keep silent. I obviously cannot tell Jamnadas Mehta what Jinnah told me, or vice versa, as both of them are hopelessly indiscreet. The only thing that is clear is that a vast amount of intrigue is going on behind the scenes, but, in the long run, I cannot see anything coming out of it at all, as none of these people trust each other round the corner. Were to hazard a guess, it would still be that the present ministry will be defeated on the budget proposals and the alternative will then lie between Congress or Section 93"—the equivalent of our present-day governor's rule.

Congress ministries were formed. And in 1939 they resigned in view of the British government's refusal to state what it intended to do about Indian Independence after the War. Jinnah announced that the Muslim League would celebrate the resignations as 'Deliverance Day.' Guess who was at his side in these 'celebrations' addressing meetings from the same platforms? Ambedkar, of course. Nationalist leaders were neither surprised that Ambedkar was on the platforms with Jinnah, nor had they any doubts about

the inspiration behind these celebrations. Addressing the Congress Legislature Party in Bombay on 27 December, 1937, Sardar Patel noted, "We cannot forget how Sir Samuel Hoare set the Muslims against the Hindus when the unity conference was held at Allahabad. The British statesmen in order to win the sympathy of the world, now go on repeating that they are willing to give freedom to India, were India united.

The 'Day of Deliverance' was evidently calculated to make the world and particularly the British public believe that India was not united and that Hindus and Muslims were against each other. But when several sections of Muslims were found to oppose the 'Day of Deliverance', the proposed anti-Hindu demonstrations were converted into a Jinnah-Ambedkar-Byramji protest against the Congress ministries and the Congress high command.

That rout in the election remained a thorn in the heart of Ambedkar for long. A large part of *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables* which Ambedkar published in 1945 is a tortuous effort to explain that actually the Congress had not done well in the election, that in fact, while groups such as his which had opposed Congress had been mauled even in reserved constituencies, they had triumphed, and the Congress, in spite of the seats having gone to it, had actually been dealt a drubbing!

Though this is his central thesis, Ambedkar gives reasons upon reasons to explain why he and his kind have lost and why the Congress has won! One of the reasons he says is that the people in general believe that the Congress is fighting for the freedom of the country. This fight for freedom, Ambedkar says, "has been carried on mostly by Hindus." It is only once that the Mussalmans took part in it and that was during the short-lived Khilafat agitation. They soon got out of it, he says. The other communities, particularly the untouchables, never took part in it.

A few stray individuals may have joined it—and they did so, Ambedkar declares, for personal gain. But the community as such has stood out. This is particularly noticeable in the last campaign of the "Fight For Freedom", which followed the 'Quit India Resolution' passed by the Congress in August 1942, Ambedkar says. And this too has not been just an oversight, in Ambedkar's reckoning it was a considered boycott. The Untouchables have

stayed out of the Freedom Movement for good and strong reasons, he says again and again.

Traditionally, according to the Hindu code of conduct, the untouchables were placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy and were known by different names in different parts of the country. They were called *Sudras*, *Atisudras*, *Chandalas*, *Antyajas*, *Pariahs*, *Dheds*, *Panchamas, Avarnas*, *Namasudras*, *Asprusthas*, etc.

The hierarchical and inegalitarian structure of Indian society came into existence during the period of *manusmriti*. The manusmriti set the tenor of social discrimination based on birth. This, in turn led to economic degradation and political isolation of the untouchables now popularly known as Dalits. Dalits are the poor, neglected and downtrodden lot. Their social disabilities were specific, severe and numerous. Their touch, shadow or even voices were considered by the caste Hindus to be polluting. They were not allowed to keep certain domestic animals, use certain metals for ornaments, eat a particular type of food, use a particular type of footwear, wear a particular type of dress and were forced to live in the outskirts of the villages towards which the wind blew and dirt flowed. Their houses were dirty, dingy and unhygienic where poverty and squalor loomed large. They were denied the use of public wells. The doors of the Hindu temples were closed for them and their children were not allowed into the schools attended by the children of caste Hindu. Barbers and washer men refused their services to them. Public services were closed to them. They followed menial hereditary occupations such as those of street sweepers, scavengers, shoe makers and carcasses removers.

Generally the term *Dalit* includes those who are designated in administrative parlance as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. However, in common political discourse, the term Dalit is so far mainly referred to Scheduled Castes. The term Scheduled Caste was used for the first time by the British officials in Government of India Act, 1935. Prior to this, the untouchable castes were known as depressed classes. Mahatma Gandhi gave them the name *Harijans* meaning children of God. Gandhi himself did not coin the name. He borrowed the name from a Bhakti movement saint of the 17th century Narsinh Mehta. The name *Harijan* became popular during 1931 amid conflicts

between Gandhi and Ambedkar on the issue of guarantying communal political representation to the dalits. Gandhi took this move as a step towards the disintegration of Hindu society. By terming the untouchables as *Harijans,* Gandhi tried to persuade caste Hindus to shed their prejudices against the *achchutas i.e.* untouchables.

The purpose to adopt this new nomenclature of *Harijan* for the untouchables was to induce change in the heart and behaviour of the Hindus towards untouchables. At the same time, it was hoped that this new name would be accepted by the untouchables who would too try to cultivate the virtues which it connotes. To quote Gandhi "…probably, Antyaja brethren would lovingly accept that name and try to cultivate the virtues which it connotes… may the Antyaja become Harijan both in name and nature" (Gandhi 1971: 244-5). The term *Harijan* got further recognition as an emancipatory nomenclature in the formation of *Harijan Sewak Sangh*, an organisation established for the purpose of upliftment of the dalits under the aegis of the Congress. A weekly '*Harijan*' was also started by Gandhi to provide voice for the cause of the downtrodden. However, Ambedkar did not find any substance in the change of name for the redressal of the structural hindrances that stood menacingly in the way of the their all around amelioration. To him it did not make any difference whether the downtrodden were called *achchuta* or *Harijan*, 'as the new nomenclature did not change their status in the social order'.

The term *Dalit* was used by no less a person than Ambedkar in his fortnightly called *Bahishkrit Bharat*. Though Ambedkar did not popularise the word Dalit for untouchables, his thoughts and actions have contributed to its growth and popularity. The word Dalit is a common usage in Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati and many other Indian languages, denoting the poor and oppressed persons. It also refers to those who have been broken, ground down by those above them in a deliberate way. "It includes all the oppressed and exploited sections of society. It does not confine itself merely to economic exploitation in terms of appropriation of surplus. It also relates to suppression of culture – way of life and value system – and, more importantly, the denial of dignity. It has essentially emerged as a political category. For some, it connotes

an ideology for fundamental change in the social structure and relationships". The word Dalit indicates struggle for an egalitarian order and provides the concept of pride to the politically active dalits. The word Dalit gained currency through the writings of Marathi writers in the early 1970s. "Dalit writers who have popularised the word have expressed their notion of Dalit identity in their essays, poems, dramas, autobiographies, novels and short stories. They have reconstructed their past and their view of the present. They have expressed their anger, protest and aspiration".

"Dalit" is a by-product of the Ambedkar movement and indicates a political and social awareness. Ambedkar adopted a different approach and philosophy for the emancipation of Scheduled Castes. He wanted to liberate the dalits by building an egalitarian social order which he believed was not possible within the fold of Hinduism whose very structure was hierarchical which relegated the dalits to the bottom. Initially, he tried to seek emancipation of the dalits by bringing transformation within the structure of Hinduism through his efforts for opening the temples for the dalits and multi-caste dinners. However, Ambedkar came to realise soon that such an approach would not bring the desired result for the amelioration of the inhuman condition of the dalits. He asserted that the dalits should come forward and fight for their own cause. He gave them the *mantra* – educate, organise and agitate. He did not have faith in the charitable spirit of the caste Hindus towards the untouchables as it failed to bring any change in the oppressive social order. Ambedkar did not have any faith in Mahatmas and Saints whose main emphasis was not on the equality between man and man. Their philosophy, according to him, was mainly concerned with the relation between man and God.

Baba Saheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, himself a Dalit, made efforts to transform the hierarchical structures of Indian society for the restoration of equal rights and justice to the neglected lot by building up a critique from within the structure of Indian society. His was not a theoretical attempt but a practical approach to the problems of untouchability. He tried to seek the solution to this perennial problem of the Indian society not by making appeals to the conscience of the usurpers or bringing transformation in

the outlook of the individual by begging but by seeking transformation in the socio-religious and politico-economic structures of the Indian society by continuous and relentless struggle against the exploitative system where he thought the roots of the untouchability lay.

He thought that until and unless the authority of the *Dharamshastras* is shaken which provided divine sanction to the system of discrimination based on the case hierarchy, the eradication of untouchability could not be realised.

It was his subaltern perspective, a perspective from below which helped him to come to the conclusion that untouchability emanated neither from religious notions, nor from the much-popularised theory of Aryan conquest. He believed that it came into existence as a result of the struggle among the tribes at a stage when they were starting to settle down for a stable community living.

In the process, the broken tribesmen were employed by the settled tribes as guards against the marauding bands. These broken tribesmen employed as guards became untouchables. However, Ambedkar could not provide answer to the problem as to why only these broken tribesmen were confined to the one part of the village in the setting towards which the wind blew and the dirt of the village flowed. Ambedkar's tirade against untouchability was a tirade to make these people conscious of their rights, and to prepare them to agitate and win their rights.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Indian Constitution: Dr. Ambedkar was one of the illustrious sons of the India who struggled throughout his life to restructure the Indian Society on humanitarian and egalitarian principles. He was not only a great national leader but also a distinguish scholar of international repute. He not only led various social movements for the upliftment of the depressed sections of the Indian Society but also contributed to the understanding of the Socio-Economic and Political problems of India through his scholarly works on caste, religion, culture, constitutional law and economic development. As a matter of fact he was an economist and his various scholarly works and speeches indicates his deep understanding of the problems faced by Indian Society.

From his very childhood, Dr. Ambedkar was forced to experience the evils of Untouchability. He being an untouchable by birth was forced to sit aside in classroom in the school. He was not allowed to touch his classmates. He could not mix and play with their fellows.

Owing to his academic brilliance, he won many government and private scholarships which helped him in attaining higher qualification from many Indian and foreign universities. He obtained a Ph.D. from Columbia in New York, D.Sc. from the London.

Having returned from London Dr. Ambedkar was given a high post in Baroda. When he reached Baroda no one came to welcome him. Worse still, even the servants in the office would not hand over the files to him. No one in the office would give him water to drink. He could not get a house to live in. On account of his low caste, he was refused a place on rent. He tried his best to get a room, but could find no shelter. He had to resign the post and returned to Bombay.

Dr. Ambedkar founded a Bahiskrit Hitkarini Sabha in 1924 for the upliftment of Dalits. He started Marathi fortnightly the "Mook Nayak" which means the leader of the dumb. Through this paper he awakened the dalits to fight for their rights. He arose a feeling of self respect and self confidence among the dalits and prepared for equal civil rights to the dalits.

Dr. Ambedkar launched marches to enter the Kala Ram Mandir in Nasik and drank water from the public tank at Mahad in Maharashtra. By this acts of the agitation, Dr. Ambedkar wanted to remove the mental dormancy of his people on an all India level. Dr. Ambedkar asked dalits to resist boldly all the acts of social tyranny" Goats! Lions are not sacrificed. Strengthen the organisation of the depressed classes all over the country as it is the only way for salvation." In 1946, Dr. Ambedkar entered into Constituent Assembly. He was taken into the Drafting Committee and there after he was elected as the Chairman of the drafting Committee. He was also taken as the Minister for law.

Dr. Ambedkar knew the difficulties for his illiterate, gullible, resourceless and helpless people to carry on the massive struggles.

The "orphans of the world" he resorted to the constitutional method to solve all the social, political and economic problems.

In the constitution, Dr. Ambedkar provided an inspiring preamble ensuring justice, social, economic and political, liberty, equality and fraternity. He provided comprehensive chapters of fundamental rights and opportunities without discrimination and for securing all freedom and for reducing economic inequalities. He also provided in the constitution safe guards for the protection of rights and interests of the dalits and minorities and equal rights to the women.

Dr. Ambedkar advocated his economic doctrine of "State socialism" in the draft constitution which he prepared and submitted to the constituent Assembly. He proposed state ownership of agriculture with a collectivised method of cultivation and a modified form of state socialism in the field of industry. Dr. Ambedkar also proposed that the above scheme of state socialism should not be left to the will of the legislature and it should be established by the law of constitution so that it will be beyond the reach of the parliamentary majority to suspend, amend or abrogate it. This guarantees state socialism while retaining parliamentary democracy. "It is only by this that one can achieve the triple objectives namely to establish socialism, retain parliamentary democracy and to avoid dictatorship".

Dr. Ambedkar also believed that this plan of state socialism was essential for increasing productivity without closing every avenue to private sector and also distributing wealth equitably. "The main purpose behind the clause is to put an obligation on the state to plan the economic life of people on lines which would lead to highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to the private enterprise and also provide for the equitable distribution of wealth." In other words his model of Economic Development was based on mixed economic system where state has to play active role while opening avenues for private sector.

Further Dr. Ambedkar also argued that if democracy was to live up to its principle of one man one value, it was essential to define both the economic structure as well as the political structure of the society by the law of constitution.

Thus it follows from the above analysis of Dr. Ambedkar's strategy of development that the state has to play very active and crucial role in accelerating the growth with justice through democratic methods. The foundation of democracy would be feeble and shaky if the contradictions between political democracy, enshrined in the constitution, and social and economic inequalities, existing in our society, are not resolved. And the shape and form of economic structure should be defined and prescribed by the law of the constitution without leaving it to the will of the legislature along with that of the structure of the political democracy so that social and economic democracy consistent with political democracy is established.

But due to the strong opposition of the constitution assembly, Dr. Ambedkar could not incorporate his scheme of state socialism under fundamental rights as a part of the constitution. Having failed to achieve his target by adopting such constitutional provisions for a free India, he resorted to the different mode to annihilate or at least weaken the caste system. He took a lengthy process of counter reservation.

The Constitution of India, the world's lengthiest written constitution was passed by the constituent assembly on November 26, 1949. It has been in effect since January 26, 1950, which is celebrated as Republic Day in India. Dr. Ambedkar said in the constituent assembly, "No matter how good a constitution may be, if the means to implement it are no good, then the constitution proves no better. If we want to establish democracy, then we must implement our social and economic ideal by means of peaceful and constitutional measures. Democracy's life is based on liberty, equality, and fraternity. There is a total lack of equality in India. We have equality in politics, but inequality reigns in the spheres of society and economics.

Dr. Ambedkar's knowledge in the constitutional law was extensive varied, profound and encyclopedic. The role played by Dr. Ambedkar in the making of the Constitution received the appreciation of all the members of the constituent Assembly.

On 26th November, the Constituent assembly approved the draft Constitution Bill. Then the first President of India Dr. Rajendra

Prasad praised the services rendered by Dr. Ambedkar in the making of the constitution and said:

> *"I have carefully watched the day to day activities from the Presidential seat. Therefore, I appreciate more than others with how much dedication and vitality this task has been carried out by the Drafting Committee and by its chairman Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar in particular. We never did a better thing than having Dr. Ambedkar on the Drafting Committee and selecting him as its chairman."*

Columbia University as its Special convocation on 5th June 1952 conferred the LLD. degree (Honours Cause) on Dr. Ambedkar in recognition of his drafting the constitution of India. The citation read: "The degree is being conferred in recognition of the work done by him in connection with the drafting of India's constitution". The University hailed him as "one of India's leading citizen, a great social reformer and valiant upholder of human rights." The same university has already conferred the Ph.D. degree on Ambedkar thirty five years before.

Gautama Buddha fought to eradicate poverty, the Dukkha. He advocated the principle of no private property. He applied this principle of no private property within the limited campus of Sanghas. He advocated the doctrine of "Majjim Patipada" or the middle course. Men should neither accumulate nor enjoy too much or too little of wealth or privileges. That became the cause of "Dukkha" for the rest of the society.

For the last and the latest social revolution Dr. Ambedkar himself adopted and advised his followers to adopt, Buddhism, the spirit of equality and justice. He took refuge in Lord Buddha on 14th October, 1956 at Nagpur along with 5 lakh of his followers. Baba Saheb, Ambedkar was planning to organise a mass conversion in very near future, but they were found dead on the night of 6th December 1956.

Important Events in His Life

- Birth, 14th April 1891
- Witness in South Barrow Commission, 1917
- Untouchables' conference, Nagpur, 1918

- Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha Formed 20th July 1924
- Nominated as MLC, Bombay Province, 1926
- Mahad Satyagraha, December 1927
- Witness in Simon Commission, May 1928
- Nashik Kala Ram temple Satyagraha, 2nd March 1930
- Representative at Round Table Conference, 1930-32
- British Communal Award, 20th August 1932
- Poona Pact, 20th September 1932
- Yewale District, Nasik Conference, 23rd October 1935
- Mahar Parishad, Bombay Province, 31st May 1936
- Independent Labout Party Formed, August 1936
- Elected MLA, Bombay Province, January 1937
- All India Scheduled Caste Federation Formed at Nagpur, April 1942
- Appointed as Labour Minister in the Viceroy's Executive Council, July 1942
- People's Education Society Formed, July 1945
- Elected to Constituent Assembly from Bengal, November 1946
- Law Minister in Independent India, 15th August 1947
- Appointed as Chairman, Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India, 29th August 1947
- Resigned from Union Cabinet, September 1951
- Elected to Rajya Sabha, March 1952
- Buddhist Society of India Formed, May 1955
- Embraced Buddhism, 14th October 1956
- Parinirvan (Death), 6th December 1956

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his Writings

- The National Dividend of India, 1916
- Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies, 1917
- Weekly 'Mook Nayak', Started 31st January 1920
- Provincial Decentralisation of Imperial Finance in British India, June 1921

- The Problem of a Rupee—Its Origin & Its Solution, March 1923
- The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India, 1925
- Weekly 'Bahishkrit Bharat', Started 13th April 1927
- Weekly 'Janata', Started December 1930
- Annihilation of Caste, December 1935
- Federation Vs Freedom, January 1939
- Thoughts on Pakistan, December 1940
- Mr. Gandhi & the Emancipation of the Untouchables, December 1942
- Ranade, Gandhi & Jinnah, January 1943
- What Congress & Gandhi have done to the Untouchables, June 1945
- Who Were the Sudras?, October 1946
- States & Minorities, March 1947
- The Untouchable, October 1948
- Maharashtra as Linguistic Province, October 1948
- Thoughts on Linguistic States, December 1955
- Buddha & His Dhamma, Published 1957

22 Vows of Dr. Ambedkar

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar prescribed 22 vows to his followers during the historic religious conversion to Buddhism on 15 October 1956 at Deeksha Bhoomi, Nagpur in India. The conversion to Buddhism by 800,000 people was historic because it was the largest religious conversion, the world has ever witnessed. He prescribed these oaths so that there may be complete severance of bond with Hinduism. These 22 vows struck a blow at the roots of Hindu beliefs and practices. These vows could serve as a bulwark to protect Buddhism from confusion and contradictions. These vows could liberate converts from superstitions, wasteful and meaningless rituals, which have led to popularisation of masses and enrichment of upper castes of Hindus.

The famous 22 vows are:

- I shall have no faith in Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh nor shall I worship them.

- I shall have no faith in Rama and Krishna who are believed to be incarnation of God nor shall I worship them.
- I shall have no faith in 'Gauri', Ganapati and other gods and goddesses of Hindus nor shall I worship them.
- I do not believe in the incarnation of God.
- I do not and shall not believe that Lord Buddha was the incarnation of Vishnu. I believe this to be sheer madness and false propaganda.
- I shall not perform 'Shraddha' nor shall I give 'pind-dan'.
- I shall not act in a manner violating the principles and teachings of the Buddha.
- I shall not allow any ceremonies to be performed by Brahmins.
- I shall believe in the equality of man.
- I shall endeavour to establish equality.
- I shall follow the 'noble eightfold path' of the Buddha.
- I shall follow the 'paramitas' prescribed by the Buddha.
- I shall have compassion and loving kindness for all living beings and protect them.
- I shall not steal.
- I shall not tell lies.
- I shall not commit carnal sins.
- I shall not take intoxicants like liquor, drugs etc.
- I shall endeavour to follow the noble eightfold path and practise compassion and loving kindness in every day life.
- I renounce Hinduism which is harmful for humanity and impedes the advancement and development of humanity because it is based on inequality, and adopt Buddhism as my religion.
- I firmly believe the Dhamma of the Buddha is the only true religion.
- I believe that I am having a rebirth.
- I solemnly declare and affirm that I shall hereafter lead my life according to the principles and teachings of the Buddha and his Dhamma.

DEATH

Since 1948, Ambedkar had been suffering from diabetes. He was bedridden from June to October in 1954 owing to clinical depression and failing eyesight. He had been increasingly embittered by political issues, which took a toll on his health. His health worsened as he furiously worked through 1955. Just three days after completing his final manuscript 'Buddha And His Dhamma', it is said that Ambedkar died in his sleep on December 6, 1956 at his home in Delhi.

Some of his supporters doubt his natural death and think death may not have been natural and put forward different theories. Try to draw parallel between his and Gandhi's death and blame Caste Brahmins.

A Buddhist-style cremation was organised for him at Chowpatty beach on December 7, attended by hundreds of thousands of supporters, activists and admirers.

Ambedkar was survived by his second wife Savita Ambedkar, born as a Caste Brahmin and converted to Buddhism with him. His wife's name before marriage was Sharda Kabir. Savita Ambedkar died as Buddhist in 2002. Ambedkar's grandson, Prakash Yaswant Ambedkar leads the Bharipa Bahujan Mahasangha and has served in both houses of the Indian Parliament.

A number of unfinished typescripts and handwritten drafts were found among Ambedkar's notes and papers and gradually made available. Among these were *Waiting for a Visa*, which probably dates from 1935-36 and is an autobiographical work, and the *Untouchables, or the Children of India's Ghetto*, which refers to the census of 1951.

A memorial for Ambedkar was established in his Delhi house at 26 Alipur Road. His birthdate is celebrated as a public holiday known as Ambedkar Jayanti. He was posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna in 1990. He is the namesake of many public institutions, such as the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

A large official portrait of Ambedkar is on display in the Parliament building. Jabbar Patel directed the Hindi-language

movie "Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar" about the life of Ambedkar, released in 2000, starring South Indian actor Mammootty as Ambedkar. Sponsored by India's National Film Development Corporation and Ministry of Social Justice, the film was released after a long and controversial gestation period. Dr. Ambedkar was the main architect of the Indian Constitution. He was born in a very poor low caste family of Madhya Pradesh. In U.S.A., he did his M.A. in 1915 and Ph.D. in 1916. From 1918 to 1920, he worked as a Professor of Law. Dr. Ambedkar set up his legal practice at the Mumbai High Court.

A number of unfinished typescripts and handwritten drafts were found among Ambedkar's notes and papers and gradually made available. Among these were Waiting for a Visa, which probably dates from 1935-36 and is an autobiographical work, and the Untouchables, or the Children of India's Ghetto, which refers to the census of 1951. A memorial for Ambedkar was established in his Delhi house at 26 Alipur Road. His birthdate is celebrated as a public holiday known as Ambedkar Jayanti. He was posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna in 1990. He is the namesake of many public institutions, such as the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. A large official portrait of Ambedkar is on display in the Parliament building. Jabbar Patel directed the Hindi-language movie "Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar" about the life of Ambedkar, released in 2000, starring South Indian actor Mammootty as Ambedkar. Sponsored by India's National Film Development Corporation and Ministry of Social Justice, the film was released after a long and controversial gestation period.

4

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Dr. Rajendra Prasad (December 3, 1884 - February 28, 1963) was the first President of India.

Rajendra Prasad was an independence activist and, as a leader of the Congress Party, played a prominent role in the Indian Independence Movement. He served as President of the Constituent Assembly that drafted the constitution of the Republic from 1948 to 1950. He had also served as a Cabinet Minister briefly in the first Government of Independent India.

EARLY LIFE

Prasad was born in Zeradei, in the Siwan district of Bihar near chapra. His father, Mahadev Sahai, was a Persian and Sanskrit language scholar; his mother, Kamleshwari Devi, was a devout lady who would tell stories from the Ramayana to her son. At the age of five, the young Rajendra Prasad was sent to a Maulavi for learning Persian. After that he was sent to Chhapra Zilla School for further primary studies. He was married at the age of 12 to Rajvanshi Devi.

He then went on to study at R.K. Ghosh's Academy in Patna to be with his elder brother Mahendra Prasad. Soon afterward, however, he rejoined the Chhapra Zilla School, and it was from there that he passed the entrance examination of Calcutta University, at the age of 18. He stood first in the first division of that examination. He joined the Presidency College in 1902.His dauntless determination towards the service of nation inspired students like Dr. Sri Krishna Sinha and Dr. Anugrah Narayan Sinha who came under his tutelage.He passed in 1915 with a Gold

medal in Masters in Law examination with honors. He went on to complete his Doctorate in Law.

LIFE EVENTS

3-12-1884	Birth, Jiradei, Saran, Sivan, Bihar
June 1896	Married (Dalan Chhapra in Baliya Distt)
March 1902	Passed Metric with First Division
March 1904	Passed F.A. from Kolkata University
March 1905	Graduated with First Division from Kolkata Unversity
December 1907	M.A. in Economy with First Division from Kolkata University
July 1908	Worked as Teacher at Bhumihar Brahman College, Mujaffar Nagar
January 1909	Worked as Principal at Bhumihar Brahman College, Mujaffar Nagar
March 1909	Went to Kolkata for Study of Law
July 1909	Worked as Professor of Economy in Kolkata City
1910	Graduated in Law (B.L.)
1911	Started Practice in Kolkata High Court
1912	Became Secretary of Welcome Committee for Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Kolkata Adhiveshan
1913	Became President of Bihar Chhatra Sammelan (Munger)
1914-15	Joined as Professor Kolkata College
1915	Passed M. L. with First Division
March 1916	Started Practice of Law in Patna High Court
1917-18	Visited Champaran with Mahatma Gandhi
1918	Published the famous English News paper "Searchlight"
1920	Published Hindi Saptahik "Desh"
1921	Established Bihar Vidyapeeth with Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Majharul Haq
1922	Became President of Welcome Committee of Gaya Congress Adhiveshan

1923	Helped the Ganga flood affected people
1924	Became President of Akhil Bhartiya Hindi Sammelan, Kokinada Adhiveshan
1926	Became Sabhapati of Bihar Prantiye Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Darbhanga
1923-27	Worked as Vice-chancellor or Bihar Vidyapeeth
1927	Visited Sri Lanka
1927	Became President of Sanyukt Prantiye Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Kangri Adhiveshan
1928	Visited England & other European Countries. Attended meetings against War and gave message of peace.
6th July 1930	Arrested in Satyagrah Aandolan
4th Jan. 1932	Arrested again in Sadakat Aashram
7th Jan. 1932	Arrested as Dictator of Congress
17th Jan. 1934	Released from Jail and helped Bihar Earth quake affected people
13th Oct. 1934	Became President of Akhil Bhartiya Adhiveshan of Congress in Mumbai.
1935	Became President of Qveta Earth Quake Society
1936	Became President of Akhil Bhartiya Hindi Sahitya Sammelan of Nagpur Adhiveshan
14th Dec. 1937	Received Degree of Doctor of Law from Allahabad University
May 1938	Became President of Ramgarh Congress Welcome Committee
1939	Became President of Contress after resignation submitted by Subhash Chandra Bose
9th Aug. 1942	Arrested under Bharat Security Rules and stayed as Najarband in Patna Jail till 15th June 1945
25th June to 14th July 1945	Attended Shimla Congress
2nd Dec. 1946	Became Minister of Food & Agriculture
11th Dec. 1946	Became President of Bhartiya Savindhan Sabha

17th Nov. 1947	Became Congress President after resignation submitted by Aacharya Kriplani
1948	Became President of Gandhi Smarak Nidhi
26th Jan. 1950 to	
12th May 1952	Acting President of Republic of India
28th Feb. 1950	Received Degree Vidyavachspati from Vidvat Parishad of Kashi University
10th April 1951	Received Degree Doctor of Law from Mysore University
30th Nov. 1951	Received Degree of Doctor of Civil Law from Delhi University
13th May 1952 to	
12th May 1957	Became First President of Republic of India
3rd Jan. 1954	Received Degree of Doctor of Literature from Patna University
Oct. 1956	Visited Nepal
3rd May 1957	Was re-elected as President of India
25th Sept. 1958	Visited Japan
6th Dec. 1958	Visited Malaya
8th Dec. 1958	Visited Indonesia
15th March	
1959	Visited Hind-China, Combodia, South Vietnam, North Vietnam and Laos
June 1959	Visited Sri Lanka
17th June 1959	Inaugurated Vidyalankar University, Colombo, Sri Lanka
25th Jan. 1960	Elder Sister Smt. Bhagwati Devi Died
20th June 1960	Visited Russia
October 1960	Visited Badrinath
24th Oct. 1960	Presented Abhinandan Granth to Rajrshi Purshotam Das Tandon in Prayag
19th July 1961	Took 5 month rest due to illness
20th Dec. 1961	Resumed Duty

8th May 1962	Last Vidai Speech in Parliament
10th May 1962	Public of Delhi gave Vidai at Ram Lila Ground
13th May 1962	Retired from the post of President of India
14th May 1962	Reached and stayed at Bihar Vidyapeeth, Sadakat Ashram, Patna
June 1962	Delivered Inaugural speech at the conference of International Nuclear War (against)
9th Sept. 1962	Wife Rajvanshi Devi Died
October 1962	Donated Jewellary of his wife for the National secutiry Fund against China War
28th Feb. 1963	Mahaprayan from Rajendra Smriti Sanghrahayala, Bihar Vidyapeeth, Sadakat Ashram, Patna, Bihar

DURING THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai and Babu Rajendra Prasad (Center) at the AICC Session, April 1939

Rajendra Prasad was drawn into the Indian freedom struggle soon after starting his career as a lawyer. During one of the fact-finding missions at Champaran, Mahatma Gandhi asked him to come with volunteers. Rajendra Prasad was greatly moved by the dedication, courage, and conviction of Mahatma Gandhi and he quit as a Senator of the University in 1921. He also responded to the call by the Mahatma to boycott Western education by asking his son Mrityunjaya Prasad, a brilliant student to drop out of the University and enroll himself in Bihar Vidyapeeth, an institution he had along with his colleagues founded on the traditional Indian model. He wrote articles for Searchlight and the Desh and collected funds for these papers. He toured a lot, explaining, lecturing and exhorting. He took active role in helping the affected people during the 1914 floods that raged in Bihar and Bengal. When the earthquake of Bihar occurred on January 15, 1934, Rajendra Prasad was in jail. During that period, he gave the entire responsibility on his behalf to his close colleague and eminent Gandhian Dr. Anugrah Narayan Sinha. He was released two days later. He set himself for the task of raising funds. The Viceroy had also raised a fund. However, while Rajendra Prasad's fund collected over 38 Lakhs (Rs. 3,800,000), three times of what the Viceroy could

manage. During the 1935 Quetta earthquake, when he was not allowed to leave the country, he set up relief committees in Sindh and Punjab.

He was elected as the President of Indian National Congress during the Bombay session in October 1934. He again became the President when Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose resigned in 1939.

After India became independent he was elected the President of India. As the first President, he was independent and unwilling to allow the Prime Minister or the party to usurp his constitutional prerogatives. However, following the tussle over the enactment of the Hindu Code Bill, he moderated his stance. He set several important precedents for later Presidents to follow.

His sister Bhagwati Devi died on the night of 25 January 1950, a day before the Republic Day of India. She doted on her dearly-loved younger brother. It was only on return from the parade that he set about the task of cremation. In 1962, after 12 years as President, he announced his decision to retire. He was subsequently awarded the Bharat Ratna, the nation's highest civilian award.

Rajen was a brilliant student throughout school and college. He stood first in the entrance examination of the University of Calcutta and was awarded a Rs. 30 per month scholarship. It was first time that a student from Bihar had excelled. He joined the Calcutta Presidency College in 1902.

The partition of Bengal in 1905 fueled the swadeshi and boycott movements. The movements had a deep effect on students in Calcutta. One day, residents of his hostel created a bonfire of all the foreign clothings they had. When Rajen went through his belongings he could not find a single item of foreign clothing.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale had started the Servants of India Society in 1905 and asked Rajen to join. So strong was his sense of duty toward his family and education that he, after much deliberation, refused Gokhale, one of the greatest nationalists of the time. Rajen recalled, "I was miserable" and for the first time in his life he barely got through his B.L. examinations.

In 1915, Rajen passed the Masters in Law examination with honors, winning a gold medal. He then completed his Doctorate in Law to attain the title, Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

While Gandhiji was on a fact finding mission in Chamaparan district of Bihar, he called on Rajendra Prasad to come to Champaran with volunteers. Dr. Prasad rushed to Champaran. Initially he was not impressed with Gandhiji's appearance or conversation. That night, while Gandhiji sat up writing letters to the Viceroy, and Indian leaders. While he prepared his court statement he asked Dr. Prasad and his followers what they would do if Gandhiji was arrested and put in prison. A volunteer jokingly said that they would all just have to go home! Dr. Prasad was deeply moved by the dedication, conviction and courage that Gandhiji displayed. Here was a man alien of the parts, who had made the cause of the people of Champaran his cause.

A court notice was served to Gandhiji. He declared that he had disobeyed the order to leave Champaran in obedience to the highest law he knew, "the voice of conscience." The case against Gandhiji was dropped. He, along with his volunteers was allowed to complete their inquiry and the Governments of Bihar and Orissa passed an Act to alleviate the burden on the peasant based on the report compiled by Gandhiji and his volunteers. From that point onward, Dr. Prasad became Gandhiji's dedicated follower.

Gandhiji's influence greatly altered many of Dr. Prasad's views, most importantly, on untouchability. Gandhiji made Dr. Prasad realize that when the nation was working for a common cause, they "became of one caste, namely the caste of co-workers." Dr. Prasad immediately simplified his already simple life. He reduced the number of servants he had to one. He no longer felt shame in sweeping the floor, or washing his own utensils.

Whenever the people suffered, Dr. Prasad was present to help reduce the pain. In 1914 floods ravaged Bihar and Bengal. Dr. Prasad became a volunteer distributing food and cloth to the flood victims. In 1934, Bihar was shaken by an earthquake. The quake caused immense damage and loss of property. The quake was followed by floods and an outbreak of malaria. Dr. Prasad dove right in with relief work, collecting food, clothes and medicine. In 1935, an earthquake hit Quetta. Dr. Prasad was not allowed to lend a hand because of Government restrictions. He did not rest. He set up relief committees in Sind and Punjab for the homeless victims that flocked there.

Dr. Prasad was shocked by the Government atrocities at Jallianwalla Bagh. He called for non-cooperation in Bihar as part of Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement. Dr. Prasad gave up his law practice and started a National College near Patna, 1921. The college was later shifted to Sadaqat Ashram on the banks of the Ganga. The non-cooperation movement in Bihar spread like wildfire. Dr. Prasad toured the state, holding public meeting after another, collecting funds and galvanizing the nation for a complete boycott of all schools, colleges and Government offices. He urged the people to take to spinning and wear only khadi. Bihar and the entire nation was taken by storm, the people responded to the leaders' call. The machinery of the mighty British Raj was coming to a grinding... halt.

The Government utilized the one and only option at its disposal-force. Mass arrests were made. Lala Lajpat Rai, Jawaharlal Nehru, Deshbandhu Chittranjan Das and Maulana Azad were arrested. Then it happened. Peaceful non- cooperation turned to violence in Chauri Chaura, Uttar Pradesh. In light of the events at Chauri Chaura, Gandhiji suspended the civil disobedience movement. The entire nation was hushed. A murmur of dissent began within the brass of the Congress. Gandhiji was criticized for what was called the "Bardoli retreat." Dr. Prasad stood by his mentor, seeing the wisdom behind Gandhiji's actions. Gandhiji did not want to set a precedent of violence for free India. In March 1930, Gandhiji launched the Salt Satyagraha. He planned to march from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi seashore to break the salt laws. A salt satyagraha was launched in Bihar under Dr. Prasad. Nakhas Pond in Patna was chosen as the site of the satyagraha. Batch after batch of volunteers courted arrest while making salt. Many volunteers were injured. Dr. Prasad called for more volunteers. Public opinion forced the Government to retract the police and allow the volunteers to make salt. Dr. Prasad sold the manufactured salt to raise funds. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

In 1934, Dr. Prasad's elder brother, Mahendra died. Rajen was deeply affected and he turned to the Gita to seek solace.

Dr. Prasad presided over the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress in October 1934. Following the resignation of Subhash Chandra Bose as the President of the Congress in April

1939, Dr. Prasad was elected President. He did his best to heal the rifts created between the incompatible ideology of Subhash Chandra Bose and Gandhiji. Rabindranath Tagore wrote to Dr. Prasad, "I feel assured in my mind that your personality will help to soothe the injured souls and bring peace and unity into an atmosphere of mistrust and chaos..."

As the freedom struggle progressed, the dark shadow of communalism which had always lurked in the background, steadily grew. To Dr. Prasad's dismay communal riots began spontaneously burst all over the nation and in Bihar. He rushed from one scene to another to control the riots. Independence was fast approaching and so was the prospect of partition. Dr. Prasad, who had such fond memories of playing with his Hindu and Muslim friends in Zeradei, now had the misfortune of witnessing the nation being ripped into two.

On August 15, 1947 India was free. Earlier, a Constituent Assembly was formed in July 1946, to frame the Constitution of India and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected its President. On November 26, 1946 the Constitution of India was completed and accepted by the people of India. On January 26, 1950, the Constitution was ratified and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected the first President of India. Dr. Prasad transformed the regal splendor of Rashtrapati Bhavan into an elegant "Indian" home. Dr. Prasad visited many countries on missions of goodwill. He stressed for peace in a nuclear age. In 1962, after 12 years as President, Dr. Prasad retired. He was awarded the highest civilian award of India, the Bharat Ratna. Dr. Prasad authored many books including his autobiography "Atmakatha" (1946), "Satyagraha at Champaran" (1922), "India Divided" (1946), "Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar, Some Reminisences" (1949), and "Bapu ke Kadmon Mein" (1954).

Having made his choice, however, he set aside the intruding thoughts, and focused on his studies with renewed vigor. In 1915, Rajen passed the Masters in Law examination with honors, winning a gold medal. Subsequently, he completed his Doctorate in Law as well.

As an accomplished lawyer, however, Rajen realized it would be only a matter of time before he would be caught up in the turmoil of the fight for independence. While Gandhiji was on a

fact finding mission in Chamaparan district of Bihar to address grievances of local peasants, he called on Rajendra Prasad to come to Champaran with volunteers. Dr. Prasad rushed to Champaran. Initially he was not impressed with Gandhiji's appearance or conversation. In time, however, Dr. Prasad was deeply moved by the dedication, conviction and courage that Gandhiji displayed. Here was a man alien of the parts, who had made the cause of the people of Champaran his own. Dr.Prasad decided that he would do everything he could to help, with his skills as a lawyer and as an enthusiastic volunteer.

Gandhiji's influence greatly altered many of Dr. Prasad's views, most importantly on caste and untouchability. Gandhiji made Dr. Prasad realize that the nation, working for a common cause, "became of one caste, namely co-workers." Dr. Prasad reduced the number of servants he had to one, and sought ways to simplify his life. He no longer felt shame in sweeping the floor, or washing his own utensils, tasks he had all along assumed others would do for him.

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His service on the various fronts of the movement for independence raised his profile considerably. Dr. Prasad presided over the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress in October 1934. Following the resignation of Subhash Chandra Bose as the President of the Congress in April 1939, Dr. Prasad was elected President. He did his best to heal the rifts created between the incompatible ideologies of Subhash Chandra Bose and Gandhiji. Rabindranath Tagore wrote to Dr. Prasad, "I feel assured in my mind that your personality will help to soothe the injured souls and bring peace and unity into an atmosphere of mistrust and chaos..."

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In July 1946, when the Constituent Assembly was established to frame the Constitution of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected its President. Two and a half years after independence, on January 26, 1950, the Constitution of independent India was ratified and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected the nation's first President. Dr. Prasad transformed the imperial splendor of Rashtrapati Bhavan into an elegant "Indian" home. Dr. Prasad visited many countries on missions of goodwill, as the new state sought to establish and nourish new relationships. He stressed the need for peace in a nuclear age.

Dr. Prasad spent the last few months of his life at the Sadaqat Ashram in Patna. He died on February 28, 1963.

Long before the Gandhian era had set in, there was born on 3 December, 1884, in an obscure village in the Saran district of North Bihar, Rajendra Prasad, whose life was to be an embodiment of the Gandhian principles. He was to Gandhiji, to quote Sarojini Naidu, what John was to Christ. Jawaharlal called him the symbol of Bharat and found "truth looking at you through those eyes". As early as 1922, C.R. Das, the President of the Gaya session of the Indian National Congress, remarked, trial "At the moment Rajendra Prasad appears to be the sole excuse for a further honest trial of Gandhism to solve a political problem".

When this view was reported to Motilal Nehru in January 1923, his reaction was almost identical: "Das is certainly correct. We have given a fair trial to Gandhism for over two years. It seems to me that the only good result it has yielded - I do not say it will not yield better or more results - is Babu Rajendra Prasad". Four year later Vithalbhai Patel remarked, "The one argument against the discontinuance of the Gandhian cult is Rajendra Prasad". Gandhiji himself once said of him : "There is at least one man who would not hesitate to take the cup of poison from my hands". No wonder Gunther called him the heart of the Congress organization. Another publicist wrote that Mahatma Gandhi with his uncanny insight picked out and groomed three of his colleagues for important roles in national life. In Jawaharlal he saw the dynamism of youth that never ages and a soaring idealism intent on a synthesis of ethical values and socio-economic objectives of modern revolutions. In Sardar he saw the great pragmatist and the man of iron will who knew how to get things done. In Rajendra Prasad he saw a great deal of himself.

Rajendra Prasad's great uncle, Chaudhur Lal, built fortunes of the family, a zamindari income of Rs.7,000/- per year and substantial farm lands. He was the Dewan of the Hathwa Raj, highly respected by all, honest, loyal and efficient. Rajendra Prasad's father, Mahadev Sahay, was a country gentleman, a scholar of Persian and Sanskrit. His hobbies were wrestling and horticulture and he took delight in providing free Ayurvedic and Unani treatment to patients who flocked to him. Rajendra Prasad's mother, Kamleshwari Devi, was a devout lady who would not give up her evening bath and Pooja even though plagued by a cough which eventually proved fatal. Every day she would tell stories from the Ramayana to young Rajendra, as he huddled close to her, eager and receptive, waiting for the light of dawn to peep into the windowless bedroom of the old-fashioned house. No wonder the Ramayana by Tulsidas became his constant companion, though he loved to browse occasionally on the Upanishads and other scriptures also.

The family shunned ostentations, lived simply and mixed freely with the co-villagers. Disparities were not irritating. There was a sense of community, fellow-feeling and kindliness. All shared in the festivals and the Poojas. The flow of village life was quiet and gentle. All this left a deep impression on young Rajendra's mind. The village came to symbolize peace and repose.

At the age of five young Rajendra was, according to the practice in the community to which he belonged, put under a Maulavi who taught him Persian. Later, he was taught Hindi and arithmetic. After the completion of this traditional education he was put in the Chapra Zilla School, from which he moved to R.K. Ghosh's Academy in Patna in order to be with his only brother,

Mahendra Prasad, who was eight years older than him and who had joined the Patna College. When Mahendra Prasad moved to Calcutta in 1897, Rajendra was admitted into the Hathwa High School. Soon he rejoined the Chapra Zilla School, from where he passed the Entrance examination of the Calcutta University at the age of eighteen, in 1902, standing first in the first division. When it is remembered that the educational jurisdiction of the Calcutta University extended from Sadiya, the easternmost frontier of British India, to a little beyond Peshawar on the north-west, the feat appears truly remarkable. He had been married for five years at that time. His wife Rajbanshi Devi was a true-to-tradition Hindu lady, merging her identity totally in that of the husband.

After passing the Entrance examination Rajendra Prasad joined the Presidency College, Calcutta, and both brothers lived together for a time in room of the Eden Hindu Hostel. A plaque still commemorates his stay, for practically the whole of his University career, in that room. Not many from Bihar had joined that metropolitan institution. But, before long, Rajendra Prasad gained immense popularity. This was demonstrated in a remarkable early moment in 1904 when as a Third year student he won in the first annual election for the post of Secretary of the College Union against a senior student belonging to a rich aristocratic family of Calcutta. Those were days when junior students did not speak to their seniors unless spoken to. Rajendra Prasad had, moreover, neither sought nor worked for the post. Dr. P.K. Roy, the Principal, in whose presence the election had taken place by show of hands, was astounded by the result, more than a thousand against seven, and enquired as to what made Rajendra Prasad so popular.

The great scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose and the highly respected P.C. Ray wanted him to offer Science, but he preferred Arts, for though he had topped in I.A. he had not topped in the Science subjects. While his remarkable distinguished academic career continued and he capped it with a First in the M.A. and a First in Master of Law, other ideas occupied his mind and heart. He had been initiated into the cult of 'Swadeshi' by his elder brother, even before his arrival in Calcutta. Now he joined, while in B.A. (Hons.) Class, the Dawn Society run by Satish Chandra Mukherjee, Sister Nivedita, Surendranath Banerjea and many other

luminaries gave discourses here. There were debating and essay-writing competitions and he bagged many of the prizes.

A new awareness was dawning on him. The anti-partition agitation stirred him. The processions, the slogans, the speeches touched new chords. He collected the Bihari students in Calcutta and they conducted activities similar to those conducted by the Dawn Society. The formation of the Bihari Students' Conference followed in 1908. It was the first organization of its kind in the whole of India. It not only led to an awakening, it nurtured and produced practically the entire political leadership of the twenties in Bihar.

At the time he set himself up as a legal practitioner in Calcutta in 1911, apprenticed to Khan Bahadur Shamsul Huda, he also joined the Indian National Congress and was elected to the A.I.C.C. A year earlier, he impressed Sir Asutosh Mukherjee so deeply that the latter offered him a Lectureship in the Presidency Law College. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the greatest political leader of India in those days, had met him in Calcutta a year earlier and had exhorted him to join the Servants of India Society in Poona. Due to lack of good management the family estate was in bad shape and Rajendra Prasad was looked upon as the retriever. But had had no doubts about what he should do.

Though he could not bring himself to have a straight talk with Mahendra Prasad, his elder brother, he sought his permission and blessing to join Gokhale through a letter in which he gave vent to his innermost thoughts. "Ambitions I have none," he had concluded, "except to be of some service to the Motherland". The shock and the anguish of his brother, however, held him to the family. About that time his mother died and his only sister Bhagwati Devi, fifteen years older than him, returned to her parents' home, a widow at nineteen, and in a way, took the place of his mother. In 1916 Rajendra Prasad shifted to Patna on the establishment of the High Court of Bihar and Orissa. Soon, he succeeded in gaining a marked ascendancy, not only over the clients and his colleagues at the Bar, but even more so on the Judges. His incisive intellect and phenomenal memory were no doubt great assets, but what really established his supremacy, over the minds of the judges in particular, was his innate integrity

and purity of character, his inability to stoop to any tactics to score a point, to win a case. Often enough when his adversary failed to cite a precedent, the Judges asked Rajendra Prasad to cite a precedent against himself.

Rajendra Prasad had first seen Gandhiji at a meeting held in Calcutta in 1915 to honour him. He was called 'Karmavir Gandhi' in those days. In the December 1916 session of the Congress, held at Lucknow, he again saw Gandhiji. He knew that the Champaran Kisan leader Rajkumar Shukla and Braj Kishore Prasad had requested Gandhiji to pay a visit to Champaran. The session had also adopted a resolution on the Champaran situation. In the April 1917, A.I.C.C. session, held in Calcutta, Gandhiji and Rajendra Prasad sat very close to each other but he did not know that Gandhiji was to be taken to his residence in Patna on his way to Champaran. He, therefore, left for Puri when the session ended.

When Gandhiji reached Rajendra Prasad's residence in Patna next morning, the servant took him to be a client and a villager and showed him the servant's bathroom and the well outside. Barefooted, clad in half achkan, dhoti and Kathiawadi purgree, carrying in a roll his bedding and a few dhotis and some food in a tin box, Gandhiji looked very much an illiterate villager. Gandhiji did not know what to do next, when, hearing of his arrival, Mazharul Haq came and took him to his palatial residence, Sikander Manzil.

There was a similar situation at Muzaffarpur Junction Station where Acharya Kripalani, a Professor in the local College, had come to receive Gandhiji with a large number of students. None had seen Gandhiji. None recognized him.

On return to Patna Rajendra Babu learnt all that had happened and hastened to Motihari. He regarded his meeting with Gandhiji as the turning point in his career. He stayed with Gandhiji till his trial was over.

Thereafter, things in the country took a different course, by reason of the Rowlatt Act and the Punjab upheaval, and in 1920, even before the civil disobedience and non-cooperation resolution of the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in September had been confirmed by the regular session held in December at

Nagpur, he took the plunge. He openly pledged himself to defy unrighteous laws, and resort to civil disobedience and non-cooperation and thus he constituted himself more or leass as an outlaw in the eyes of the British Government in India.

The decades that followed were years of intense activity and heavy suffering. He ceased to be a Senator of the University to the regret of the British Vice-Chancellor. He withdrew his sons, Mrityunjaya and Dhanajjaya, and his nephew, Janardan from the Benares Hindu University and other schools. He wrote articles for Searchlight and the Desh and collected funds for these papers. He toured a lot, explaining, lecturing, exhorting. He was the life-breath of the constructive programme and a great votary of Khadi. He was the first leading political figure in the Eastern Provinces to join forces with Gandhiji at a time when the latter was without a large and effective following.

Another such leader from the West who joined Gandhiji was Vallabhbhai Patel. During the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha Rajendra Babu and Vallabhbhai came closer. Rajendra Babu cherished Sardar's friendship as one of the most pleasant memories of his life. He often went to Sabarmati and toured the country with Gandhiji. He suffered several terms of rigorous imprisonment. He suffered privations for want of a regular income of his own. All the while he suffered from asthma. He would not accept any financial assistance from the Congress or from any other source and depended mostly on his elder brother.

He was in jail when on 15 January, 1934 the devastating earthquake in Bihar occurred. He was released two days later. Though ailing, he set himself immediately to the task of raising funds and organizing relief.

The Viceroy also raised a fund for the purpose. While his fund swelled to over 38 lakhs, the Viceroy's fund, despite his great influence, resources and prestige, remained at one third of the amount. The way relief was organized left nothing to be desired. Nationalist India expressed its admiration by electing him to the President of the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress. Mahendra Prasad, his elder brother, had died. The Congress through a resolution remembered his social services and his devotion to the national cause.

When the Congress Ministries were formed in 1937, it was the Parliamentary Board consisting of Sardar Patel, Rajendra Babu and Maulana Azad, which really and effectively provided guidance and control. In 1939 when Subhas Chandra Bose had to be relieved of the office of the Congress President, it was Rajendra Prasad who was persuaded to face the crisis and overcome it. The Congress faced another crisis when Acharya Kripalani resigned and Rajendra Babu had to step into the breach, even though he happened to be India's Food and Agriculture Minister and President of the Constituent Assembly.

He realized that industrialism had disrupted the web of village life woven and integrated for centuries. It had to be re-woven into a new pattern. He wanted that pattern to be inspired by Gandhian values; human needs and acquisitiveness to be regulated through self-discipline; agricultural production to be maximized, village industries to be resuscitated and their scope enlarged; the old sense of community to be recaptured. But he found that the country was unable to resist the pull of industrialization, even hurriedly thought-out industrialization, and he was not happy at the development. This was one reason why he declined to accept the Chairmanship of the Planning Commission.

This was why, when Wavell informally enquired what portfolio he would choose if he were to choose it for himself, he said that he hardly needed time to think about it. It had to be Food and Agriculture. Wavell was amused and there was an unspoken why. "Well", Rajendra Babu went on, "the subject is familiar to me. He knew all that the best farmer knows about agricultural operations and practices. But he also realized that certain improvements had to be effected on those methods. The slogan 'Grow More Food' was given by him and the campaign was initiated by the Food Ministry under his guidance. He could not, however, continue for long in that Ministry and ensure compliance with the policies initiated by him. But, before he relinquished charge, he did, as Gandhiji wanted, effect decontrol of foodgrains, and though officials and public men alike had prophesied disaster, nothing untoward happened.

His stewardship of the Constituent Assembly was exemplary. He guided, regulated, controlled, but did so with such infinite

patience, skill, grace and firmness that not only none had a sense of grievance but all felt that the discussions were always full, free and frank and left nothing to be desired. During the very first session of the Constituent Assembly, he had announced that though the Assembly was born under limitations it would outgrow those and function as a sovereign body, recognizing no outside authority. The proceedings of the last day of the Constituent Assembly read like pages from a book of tributes and, in a way, indicate how loved and respected he was by each section of the House.

His elevation to the Presidentship in 1950 came as a matter of course. There were some doubts in some quarters. Could a person who was temperamentally a peasant, who lived and dressed like one, impress in an office where ceremonialism and gilded trappings counted? But nothing else was possible. He was the only choice and there could not be another.

As President, he exercised his moderating influence and moulded policies or actions so silently and unobtrusively that many were led to think that, unlike any other Head of State, he neither reigned nor ruled.

He never worried about what people said about him. He never looked into the mirror of history. There were occasions when he differed from the Prime Minister. But that was nothing new. They had differred for almost three decades and yet worked together in the Congress. The differences never embittered their personal relations. Perhaps, both realized that they arose out of their differing backgrounds, beliefs, approaches and attitudes.

It was in 1960 that he announced his intention to retire, and though there were many regrets and many tried to persuade him to continue for a third term, his mind was made up. Jayaprakash Narayan welcomed the decision, suggesting that his direct guidance might be available after retirement to the Sarvodaya Movement. But the 1961 illness, severed and protracted, shattered Rajendra Prasad's health completely. Many therefore, worried at his decision to go back to the Sadaquat Ashram. How could he guide any constructive movement with that frail body of his? Would not the inconveniences of the Ashram prove too much for his health? His elder sister Bhagwati Devi had passed away in the night of 25 January, 1960. She doted on her dearly-loved younger

brother, to whose house she had returned within two years of her marriage, a widow at nineteen. It must have taken Rajendra Babu all his will power to have taken the Republic Day salute as usual, on the following day, seemingly unruffled. It was only on return from the parade that he set about the task of cremation.

Within months of his retirement, early in September 1962, passed away his wife Rajbanshi Devi, whose contribution to making him what he was, though indirect, was considerable. Frail and an invalid for a long time, she was the very embodiment of the spirit of renunciation, selflessness, self-effacement and devotion. She had asked for little and though she had been only partly a companion to him, she had silently encouraged him and never stood in the way. Her husband's will was her will, his pleasure hers. Not many words were exchanged between the two - they would sit quietly together for hours - and yet their silent communion filled the atmosphere with distinct aura.

No wonder, his last days were days of agony. The Chinese aggression had shaken him completely. He had apprehended the danger. He had thought of the dreaded possibility. But "perhaps those who thought otherwise knew better". This consolation was shaken away by the naked aggression. His will to live was weakening. In a letter to one devoted to him, he wrote a month before his death: "I have a feeling that the end is near, end of the energy to do, end of my very existence". And so, when the end came suddenly on 28 February, 1963, he was not unprepared. He died, after a few hours' illness, with 'Ram Ram' on his lips.

Ever since the present Contributor came near him in 1933, the bond grew stronger as the years passed. Rajendra Prasad had great affection for him and valued his judgement. Rajendra Babu and the present Contributor were together in the Birla House when the Interim Government was formed in September 1946. Rajendra Babu said, "We must now move to our residences" The present contributor had brought nothing except his clothes, and wondered as to how to go about setting up a home. When he reached No. Queen Victoria Road - now Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road - in the evening, he was pleasantly surprised to find that not only were all provisions and utensils and crockeries there, but even the statue of goddess Lakshmi had not been forgotten.

Rajendra Babu shared Gandhiji's great vision, the making of a new man in a new society. His mind was capable of broad sweeps. But it would take in at the same time the smallest details.

SPEECHES

15th World Vegetarian Congress 1957

Delhi/Bombay/Madras, India

From The Vegetarian, Jan-Feb, 1958:

Inaugural Speech by the President of India

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

"I extend to you, ladies and gentlemen, who have come from long distances to attend this Vegetarian Conference, a hearty welcome. I see before me a gathering of convinced and confirmed vegetarians. Vegetarianism as a movement has been going on in Europe for a long time and Mahatma Gandhi in his Experiments with Truth mentions a number of books proving the superiority of vegetarian food from different points of view. He also mentions a Vegetarian Society in London of which he was an active member during his student days in the early nineties of the last century. It is, therefore, not surprising that a Conference of this nature should have been held in some countries of Europe.

You have had previous sessions of the Vegetarian Conference in other countries, but India has certain characteristics which are her own. I do not think there is any other country where people in such large numbers are vegetarians and have been abstaining from meat diet for generations. That has been so because meat diet has been regarded as unsuitable, if not harmful, to spiritual growth, and our scriptures have laid down rules regulating food. These rules are based essentially on an appreciation of the laws of non-violence or ahimsa, that is, avoiding harm to all, not only living creatures, but plants, etc., also. All our ancient sciences and shastras look upon life as an integrated whole and co-ordinate different activities in such a way as to fit in with and help in the upward growth of man. We have thus no double standards nor artificial divisions in our activities such as we sometimes hear made by some people. For

example, it is common enough to hear that a man's religion is his own affair and has nothing to do with his politics. Similarly his life and politics are two different things, and what he eats, how he lives and carries on his other private affairs have nothing to do with his public activities. We as a matter of fact believe that each activity has its repercussions on other activities and we cannot divide either the activities or their effects. It is on this basis that food is sought to be so related as to create that kind of calm and unperturbed mind, which in its turn may devote itself to private or public functions, to spiritual no less than to mundane affairs.

When I say all this, I do not claim that as a people we are living up to these ideals. If we did, the country and our people would be something very different from what they are: and yet it is some of these which have enabled us to survive trials and vicissitudes which few other nations or people have faced as we have had to do in history. If we analyse the factors, the fundamental thing as I have said above, is non-violence, which in its active and positive form means active love for others, and in its passive form means tolerance for others. In other words, while on the one hand we believe in doing active good, on the other, we believe in allowing others to live their own lives, to have their own thoughts and to talk in their own way and freely. This tolerance has been a characteristic faith of our people and has in fact been the mother of all our metaphysical and philosophical thought, and the growth side by side of different religions within the country. It was not a mere accident but a logical result of our thought processes that at a time when animal sacrifices were insisted upon by the predominant school of thought, Buddhism with its philosophical insistence on non-violence, and Jainism with its practical application in the most meticulous and in some respects extreme form, arose in this country. It was again not an accident but equally a logical process that Christianity, since its earliest days when it had no political significance, and later on Zoroastrianism found a hospitable atmosphere and field to flourish in this country. Islam, with all its conquering zeal, became tamed in India, and the conquests by its saints became as significant as, if not more than the conquests of the Muslim conquerors and rulers. And

today we have got a composite culture in which so many elements have contributed to make a mosaic of a most beautiful and variegated pattern of society.

Vegetarianism therefore in India has always been a semi-religious social feature of our life and not merely expressive only of dietetic theories or economic necessity, although results in these respects have also flowed from it. It is therefore not surprising that there are so many castes and communities which have been vegetarian for genera-tions, no member of which has ever touched or tasted meat derived from any slaughtered animal, big or small. When I say this, I should not be misunderstood as claiming that India as a whole is vegetarian or that even a majority of its population is vegetarian. It is only some Hindu castes and communities who are vegetarian as such. The Muslims, the Christians, the Parsis, the Sikhs, and even the Buddhists, are not vegetarians as a community: that is to say, meat-eating is not socially prohibited amongst them, which is the case with the other communities mentioned above. But in another sense a large majority is vegetarian, not in the sense that it does not or cannot eat meat but because it does not get it or cannot afford it. It is only a small proportion of our population who are regular meat-eaters. Even among these, vegetables, cereals and fruits constitute a larger proportion of their daily fare in this country than in other countries.

It may also be stated that we have our peculiar ideas - call them prejudices if you like - about some of these matters. Even those who eat meat are not permitted to take all kinds of meat, but have limitations put on their choice of meat either by restricting the animals the flesh of which may be eaten or by restricting the time and the number of days in the year when it may or may not be taken, and curiously enough, even by the method of which an animal intend-ed for food is to be slaughtered. Thus there are certain animals which differ from community to community the flesh of which may not be eaten and must be eschewed. There are some days or some occasions on which meat may not he eaten, and there are restrictions on the way in which, and the occasion on which the animal may be slaughtered and its flesh eaten. So far as the Hindus are concerned, all these

restrictions and inhibitions are based more or less on a recognition of the weakness of man's palate, on the value of absten-tion and on the necessity of restricting the use as much and in as many ways as possible. No wonder therefore that whether as a matter of tradition or family custom, personal belief or communal regulation, or whether as a result of economic factors or appreciation of the value of non-meat diet for healthy growth of body, mind and soul, we have a considerable proportion of our population which completely abstains from meat, and a very much larger proportion which indulges in meat diet occasionally and on particular occasions. I may also note for the information of foreigners who may not be acquainted with our customs, that, generally speaking, in India we do not regard milk and milk products as non-vegetarian food. On the other hand, eggs, even non-fertile eggs, are regarded as non-vegetarian food in orthodox circles.

All these considerations have combined to produce a society in India which in the matter of food differs in this respect from other countries. Whether it was considered a valid argument or not in the olden days when ahimsa and the effect of the food on human nature were emphasized in eschewing animal food, our present-day economic situation fits in very well with our traditional mode of living. Our population is large and is growing tremendously at the rate of 4 to 5 millions per year. The quantity of land is limited and can-not be increased even by an inch. The uncultivated portion may be brought under cultivation, but there is no doubt that within the foreseeable future, it will be impossible to increase the land under cultivation. Increase in yield per unit of land has also conceivably a limit. We have therefore to consider whether cereals or meat can be more economically grown on the land. In countries where vast areas are still available and grazing grounds extend far and wide animals may be bred for meat purposes. "The generally accepted computation is that 2 1/2, acres of land are required to provide a minimum adequate diet for each person, by Western standards, anyhow. On a vegetarian diet it has been estimated that 1 1/2 acres per head may provide enough. The reason for this difference is that animals grazed for meat-eating purposes require from 9 to 15 times more land than is necessary to raise an equivalent amount of nutrition in the form of grains, vegetables and fruit for human consumption." This is the conclusion arrived at by Mr. Richard B. Gregg, an American, on a study of the literature on the subject. It is therefore a very lucky and fortunate coincidence that our vegetarianism, limited though it may be, reduces tremendously the pressure on land which is already being felt in many parts of the country.

It is not for a vegetarian to claim that his food can produce better men and women than meat food. There may be various standards for judging men and it is possible that judged by one standard, meat-eaters are better than vegetarians: and vegetarians may be found to be better than meat-eaters if judged by another standard, as for example in the matter of endurance.

But apart from these, there is a fundamental point which has become relevant in the context of modern conditions and the history of civilization as it has developed during the past few centuries. There can be no doubt that non-violence or the policy of live and let live, is the only policy which can solve most of our troubles and problems. As I have indicated above, in its active form it means readiness to sacrifice one's self, one's comfort and one's ambitions for the sake of others. The alternative is to utilise others to fulfil one's own desires and ambitions. Somehow or other, man has for centuries convinced himself that he is the best and the most evolved of all known creatures and it is therefore only right and proper that all other creatures should be made to subserve man and satisfy him. It is this policy or theory which enables us to slaughter without hesitation other living animals either to satisfy our palate or to fill our stomach or to decorate our body or only to give us amusement as in sports.

In times which were considered to be less civilized and when man was only a hunter, he lived more or less like any other wild animal by hunting another animal for his food. As his tastes and desires were limited, he did not destroy as much as the more civil-ized man of today has to destroy to satisfy his tastes. In those days, although man lived on other animals, he did not breed animals only to be slaughtered as is done today on a tremendously big scale. Millions and millions of animals are

bred and fattened only to be slaughtered to supply food and other requirements of man. Medi-cines too account for the torture and slaughter of numberless animals in various ways, and so, as we have progressed in civilization, respect for life has become less and less. We have now reached a stage when that lessened respect for life is not confined to what are called lower animals, but has come to include human beings: and therefore it is a matter of deep concern though it is more or less a logical result of lessening respect for animal life that respect for human life also has gone down tremendously. That is, if man being superior to another animal can exploit and even slaughter it for his own pur-poses, the next natural step is that the stronger man or nation should consider it nothing wrong to exploit or even destroy a weaker man or tribe or nation. This is what has happened and what is at the root of all exploitation by the people of one country of the people of another for no reason except that it was necessary to do so to raise the standard of living of the former at the expense of the latter.

Not long ago there used to be restrictions on wanton destruction of human life even in war and between warriors of opposing sides. But that idea is now out of date, and today, with the weapons of mass destruction at man's disposal, the human race itself is in imminent danger of being destroyed. It is a far cry from veget-arianism to atomic or hydrogen bomb, but if you look at it, there is no escape from vegetarianism ultimately if we want to escape from the hydrogen bomb. Any integrated view of life as a whole will reveal to us the connection between the individual's food and his behaviour towards others, and through a process of ratiocination which is not fantastic, we cannot but arrive at the conclusion that the only means of escaping the hydrogen bomb is to escape the mentality which has produced it, and the only way to escape that mentality is to cultivate respect for all life, life in all forms, under all conditions. It is only another name for vegetarianism.

Let me hope that your deliberations in the environment of this country will be fruitful and even India, which at the present moment seems to he rushing headlong on the path followed by Western nat-ions, will stop awhile and think out afresh the implications and ultimate consequences of her own policies."

True Happiness

11th October 1954

It seems to have been taken for granted that by acquiring certain material resources we can raise the standard of living of human beings. Following this principle, all the countries of the world are set upon acquiring and multiplying their resources. It is no doubt right that a hungry man cannot think of praying. Mahatma Gandhi himself once said that the hungry man sees God only in the form of bread. But even then we should think how far this kind of material prosperity can lead to real happiness.

I have also heard that the countries, which are known to be prosperous and resourceful, are not blessed with mental peace, whereas, on the other hand, we find lots of poor people, who excite our pity, leading a happy and contented existence. The truth is that the source of real happiness is in one's own inner self and not in the outside world. We equate happiness with the world of external things and that is why there is a scramble for acquisition and accumulation of things. The fact is that these things are, at best, no more than the means to achieve happiness and not happiness itself. One can experience happiness even without them. Apart from this, it is worthwhile considering what is real happiness.

I think real happiness or peace of mind means the complete freedom from extraneous pressure or restraint or inhibitions. One basic fact, which must be recognized, is that any kind of inhibition or restraint is irksome. It ceases to be irksome only when it becomes something voluntarily accepted or adopted without restraint or coercion. It is this voluntary adoption of any line of thought or action without restraint or coercion from outside which brings real happiness. Any subtraction from complete freedom is loss of freedom to that extent and implies dependence on something else.

Man as a member of society or even as an individual has long ceased to be fully free, if he ever was or can be free. All that can be aimed at or achieved is the reduction or minimization of this restraint or coercion and increasing to the maximum the freedom which man enjoys. His material requirements can be

satisfied, it is obvious, only by subjecting himself to some curtailment of this freedom. His mental satisfaction and possibly his spiritual aspiration becomes reduced in quantum and perhaps also in quality by the amount of material satisfaction which in the very nature of things implies restraint. What is generally termed progress has tended more and more to restrict man's freedom. In every department of life and activity man has to submit more and more to external restraints and inhibitions.

It follows that there must be consequential and proportionate diminution in the mental satisfaction and spiritual endeavor even though man may not feel that restraint or realize the ever-growing restraint being put on him from day to day. It is thus clear that real happiness lies in freedom from restraint, which in turn, implies man's capacity to carry on with as little dependence on others as possible. We cannot escape from the conclusion that what is generally called high standard of living has served to increase our dependence on others and to that extent has removed us further from real happiness.

We see in the world of today that distance between country and country has almost been eliminated and nations living far apart from one another have come closer so that if something happens at one place it has its repercussion far and wide. It does not hold good with regard to only dreadful things like war but also of beneficent activities. One of the results of this progress has been that man is now dependent for his daily necessities of life on far off countries. An example will clarify the point. Many of us present here today have known the days when the railway system in India not expanded to the present extent, when there were no automobiles of any kind and when we had not even heard of the aeroplanes.

At that time also food was as important as it is today. Then every community depended for its food on itself and on the land, which it cultivated. True, if there was failure of a crop on account of natural calamities like floods or drought, the community suffered. But otherwise it managed to live on what it produced and learnt in course of time the wisdom and the prudence to save food for emergencies. On account of the improvement in the means of transport today food grains can

be easily supplied from one part of the country to another. We saw recently that food had to be dropped by aeroplanes on areas, which were rendered inaccessible, by flood. All this sounds so nice, but we have to see whether these developments have enhanced or restricted our freedom. My feeling is that by increasing such needs, as he cannot fulfill himself man has necessarily restricted his freedom.

By giving the example of food imports, I have tried to show our dependence on other countries. That is not all. If far off Argentina, Canada or America has a bumper wheat crop, it results in the falling of wheat prices in India. Because of the improved means of transport, the availability or otherwise of things does not depend on local conditions but on the overall world conditions. If food cannot be imported from other countries because of some natural calamity or as a result of the out-break of war, the needy country will have to suffer untold misery. We saw during the last war how even people of neutral countries had to suffer because of the restrictions on export and import of certain articles from overseas. So, there are two aspects of this, progress. One promises plenty during peacetime, the other threatens to release a rich harvest of sufferings and privations in case communications are dislocated on account of hostilities.

It is necessary to remember that even if all of our requirements are satisfied, we are bartering our freedom for that satisfaction. For instance, whenever there is disease in an epidemic form in the country, we have to depend on other countries to supply us with medicines. Similarly, whenever there is a famine, others can save us from its dire consequences, but at the same time, if they like, they can also starve us by withholding the supply of food grains. If war breaks out today the belligerents need not resort to deadly weapons in order to kill others. They can do it equally effectively by disrupting the system of transport. Therefore, while on the one hand, we are endeavoring to raise the standard of living; those very efforts might result in the curtailing of our freedom and independence.

In spite of this all-round progress we have not yet reached a stage when we could produce an article in sufficient quantity so as to meet the requirements of all the peoples of the world.

When we cannot say this about food, which tops the list of man's needs, it is no use talking about other things which are produced in still lesser quantities. That is why the standard of living of all the countries is not uniformly high and presents an unpleasant contrast. Those who possess more are anxious to extort more and more from those who do not possess much. The result is naturally conflict between man and man and country and country. The fear of this conflict has become a nightmare for the modern man.

It is, therefore, necessary to realize that what we have assumed as axiomatic truth, namely, that increase in material prosperity also means the attainment of happiness, is neither quite correct nor so self-evident. This assumption is true only up to a certain limit and the more we transgress this limit the more remote become our chances of being happy. This limit has to be fixed by man himself. This is undoubtedly beset with countless difficulties, but I do think that it is not altogether impossible for man to achieve happiness without the usual paraphernalia, which passes for his everyday necessities. This is exactly what is meant by the adage, 'simple living and high thinking'. It was by practising this truth that Mahatma Gandhi could enjoy that happiness which a humble follower of his is unable to have even in the palatial Rashtrapati Bhavan.

I do not suggest that ambition or high aspirations or desire for progress should be discouraged. But let us be sure that our will to progress and rise high will materialize in the true sense only after we have realized that the source of our happiness does not lie outside us but is enshrined within our own hearts. Our happiness will vary directly in proportion to the degree of our faith in the above truth. The more we try to achieve happiness, basing it on the outside world, the more we shall be inviting conflicts and depriving others of their happiness.

5

Abul Kalam Azad

Abul Kalam Muhiyuddin Ahmed (11 November 1888 - 22 February 1958) was a Muslim scholar and a senior political leader of the Indian independence movement. He was one of the most prominent Muslim leaders to support Hindu-Muslim unity, opposing the partition of India on communal lines. Following India's independence, he became the first Minister of Education in the Indian government. He is commonly remembered as Maulana Azad; he had adopted Azad (Free) as his pen name.

As a young man, Azad composed poetry in Urdu as well as treatises on religion and philosophy. He rose to prominence through his work as a journalist, publishing works critical of the British Raj and espousing the causes of Indian nationalism. Azad became a leader of the Khilafat Movement during which he came into close contact with Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi. Azad became an enthusiastic supporter of Gandhi's ideas of non-violent civil disobedience, and worked actively to organise the Non-cooperation movement in protest of the 1919 Rowlatt Acts. Azad committed himself to Gandhi's ideals, including promoting Swadeshi (Indigenous) products and the cause of Swaraj (Self-rule) for India. He would become the youngest person to serve as the President of the Indian National Congress in 1923.

Azad was one of the main organisers of the Dharasana Satyagraha in 1931, and emerged as one of the most important national leaders of the time, prominently leading the causes of Hindu-Muslim unity as well as espousing secularism and socialism. He served as Congress President from 1940 to 1945, during which the Quit India rebellion was launched and Azad was imprisoned

with the entire Congress leadership for three years. Azad became the most prominent Muslim opponent of the demand for a separate Muslim state of Pakistan and served in the interim national government. Amidst communal turmoil following the partition of India, he worked for religious harmony. As India's Education Minister, Azad oversaw the establishment of a national education system with free primary education and modern institutions of higher education. He is also credited with the foundation of the University Grants Commission, an important institution to supervise and advance the higher education in the nation.

EARLY LIFE

Azad's family descended from a line of eminent Ulama or scholars of Islam, hailing from Herat in Afghanistan and had settled in India during the reign of the Mughal emperor Babur. His mother was of Arab descent, the daughter of Shaikh Muhammad Zahir Watri and his father, Maulana Khairuddin was of ethnic Pashtun origin[citation needed]. The family lived in the Bengal region until Maulana Khairuddin left India during the Indian rebellion of 1857 and settled in Mecca, the holiest city in Islam, where he met his wife. The family returned to Kolkata (then Calcutta) in 1890 where his father earned a reputation as a learned Muslim scholar. Azad's mother died when he was 11 years old.

Azad was raised in an environment steeped in Islamic religion. He was given a traditional Islamic education, tutored at his home and in the neighbourhood mosque by his father and later religious scholars. Azad mastered several languages, including Urdu, Persian, Arabic, and Hindi. He was also trained in the subjects of mathematics, philosophy, world history and science by reputed tutors hired by his family. An avid and determined student, Azad succeeded in completing the traditional course of study at the young age of sixteen, nine years ahead of his contemporaries. At the age of thirteen, he was married to a young Muslim girl, Zuleikha Begum. Azad was, more closer, a follower of the Deobandi school and compiled many treatises reinterpreting the Qur'an, the Hadith, and the principles of Fiqh and Kalam. A young man, Azad was also exposed to the modern intellectual life of Kolkata, the then capital of British-ruled India and the centre of cultural and political life. He began to doubt the traditional ways of his father and secretly diversified his studies. Azad learned English through intensive personal study and began learning Western philosophy, history and contemporary politics by reading advanced books and modern periodicals. Azad grew disillusioned with Islamic teachings and was inspired by the modern views of Muslim educationalist Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who had promoted rationalism. Increasingly doubtful of religious dogma, Azad entered a period of self-described "atheism" and "sinfulness" that lasted for almost a decade.

REVOLUTIONARY AND JOURNALIST

Azad developed political views considered radical for most Muslims of the time and became a full-fledged Indian nationalist. He fiercely criticised the British for racial discrimination and ignoring the needs of common people across India. He also criticised Muslim politicians for focusing on communal issues before the national interest and rejected the All India Muslim League's communal separatism. Azad developed curiosity and interest in the pan-Islamic doctrines of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and visited Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey. But his views changed considerably when he met revolutionary activists in Iraq and was influence by their fervent anti-imperialism and nationalism. Against common Muslim opinion of the time, Azad opposed the partition of Bengal in 1905 and became increasingly active in revolutionary activities, to which he was introduced by the prominent Hindu revolutionaries Sri Aurobindo and Shyam Sundar Chakravarthy. Azad initially evoked surprise from other revolutionaries, whose cause had been opposed by most Muslims, but Azad won their praise and confidence by working secretly to organise revolutionaries activities and meetings in Bengal, Bihar and Mumbai (then Bombay).

Azad's education had been shaped for him to become a cleric, but his rebellious nature and affinity for politics turned him towards journalism. He established an Urdu weekly newspaper in 1912 called Al-Hilal and openly attacked British policies while exploring the challenges facing common people. Espousing the ideals of

Indian nationalism, Azad's publications were aimed at encouraging young Muslims into fighting for independence and Hindu-Muslim unity. His work helped improve the relationship between Hindus and Muslims in Bengal, which had been soured by the controversy surrounding the partition of Bengal and the issue of separate communal electorates.

With the onset of World War I, the British stiffened censorship and restrictions on political activity. Azad's Al-Hilal was consequently banned in 1914 under the Press Act. Azad started a new journal, the Al-Balagh, which increased its active support for nationalist causes and communal unity. In this period Azad also became active in his support for the Khilafat agitation to protect the position of the Sultan of Ottoman Turkey, who was the caliph for Muslims worldwide. The Sultan had sided against the British in the war and the continuity of his rule came under serious threat, causing distress amongst Muslim conservatives. Azad saw an opportunity to energise Indian Muslims and achieve major political and social reform through the struggle. With his popularity increasing across India, the government outlawed Azad's second publication under the Defence of India Regulations Act and arrested him. The governments of the Bombay Presidency, United Provinces, Punjab and Delhi prohibited his entry into the provinces and Azad was moved to a jail in Ranchi, where he was incarcerated until January 1, 1920.

NON-COOPERATION

Upon his release, Azad returned to a political atmosphere charged with sentiments of outrage and rebellion against British rule. The Indian public had been angered by the passage of the Rowlatt Acts in 1919, which severely restricted civil liberties and individual rights. Consequently, thousands of political activists had been arrested and many publications banned. The killing of unarmed civilians at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar on April 13, 1919 had provoked intense outrage all over India, alienating most Indians, including long-time British supporters from the authorities. The Khilafat struggle had also peaked with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I and the raging Turkish War of Independence, which had made the caliphate's position

precarious. India's main political party, the Indian National Congress came under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who had aroused excitement all over India when he led the farmers of Champaran and Kheda in a successful revolt against British authorities in 1918. Gandhi organised the people of the region and pioneered the art of Satyagraha - combining mass civil disobedience with complete non-violence and self-reliance.

Taking charge of the Congress, Gandhi also reached out to support the Khilafat struggle, helping to bridge Hindu-Muslim political divides. Azad and the Ali brothers warmly welcomed Congress support and began working together on a programme of non-cooperation by asking all Indians to boycott British-run schools, colleges, courts, public services, the civil service, police and military. Non-violence and Hindu-Muslim unity were universally emphasized, while the boycott of foreign goods, especially clothes were organised. Azad joined the Congress and was also elected president of the All India Khilafat Committee. Although Azad and other leaders were soon arrested, the movement drew out millions of people in peaceful processions, strikes and protests.

This period marked a transformation in Azad's own life. Along with fellow Khilafat leaders Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan and others, Azad grew personally close to Gandhi and his philosophy.

The three men founded the Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi as an institution of higher education managed entirely by Indians without any British support or control. Both Azad and Gandhi shared a deep passion for religion and Azad developed a close friendship with him. He adopted Gandhi's ideas by living simply, rejecting material possessions and pleasures. He began to spin his own clothes using khadi on the charkha, and began frequently living and participating in the ashrams organised by Gandhi. Becoming deeply committed to ahimsa (non-violence) himself, Azad grew close to fellow nationalists like Jawaharlal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das and Subhash Chandra Bose. He strongly criticised the continuing suspicion of the Congress amongst the Muslim intellectuals from the Aligarh Muslim University and the Muslim League.

The rebellion began a sudden decline when with rising incidences of violence; a nationalist mob killed 22 policemen in Chauri Chaura in 1922. Fearing degeneration into violence, Gandhi asked Indians to suspend the revolt and embarked on a fast-unto-death to repent and encourage others to stop the rebellion. Although the movement stopped all over India, several Congress leaders and activists were disillusioned with Gandhi. The following year, the caliphate was overthrown by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the Ali brothers grew distant and critical of Gandhi and the Congress. Azad's close friend Chittaranjan Das co-founded the Swaraj Party, breaking from Gandhi's leadership. Despite the circumstances, Azad remained firmly committed to Gandhi's ideals and leadership. In 1923, he became the youngest man to be elected Congress President. Azad led efforts to organise the Flag Satyagraha in Nagpur. Azad served as president of the 1924 Unity Conference in Delhi, using his position to work to re-unite the Swarajists and the Khilafat leaders under the common banner of the Congress. In the years following the movement, Azad travelled across India, working extensively to promote Gandhi's vision, education and social reform.

CONGRESS LEADER

Azad had become an important national leader, and would serve on the Congress Working Committee and in the offices of general secretary and president many times. The political environment in India re-energised in 1928 with nationalist outrage against the Simon Commission appointed to propose constitutional reforms. The commission included no Indian members and did not even consult Indian leaders and experts. In response, the Congress and other political parties appointed a commission under Motilal Nehru to propose constitutional reforms from Indian opinions. In 1928, Azad endorsed the Nehru Report, which was criticised by the Ali brothers and Muslim League politician Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Azad endorsed the ending of separate electorates based on religion, and called for an independent India to be committed to secularism. At the 1928 Congress session in Guwahati, Azad endorsed Gandhi's call for dominion status for India within a year. If not granted, the Congress would adopt the goal of complete political independence for India. Despite his

affinity for Gandhi, Azad also drew close to the young radical leaders Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Bose, who had criticised the delay in demanding full independence. Azad developed a close friendship with Nehru and began espousing socialism as the means to fight inequality, poverty and other national challenges.

When Gandhi embarked on the Dandi Salt March that inaugurated the Salt Satyagraha in 1930, Azad organised and led the nationalist raid, albeit non-violent on the Dharasana salt works in order to protest the salt tax and restriction of its production and sale. The biggest nationalist upheaval in a decade, Azad was imprisoned along with millions of people, and would frequently be jailed from 1930 to 1934 for long periods of time. Following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1934, Azad was amongst millions of political prisoners released. When elections were called under the Government of India Act 1935, Azad was appointed to organise the Congress election campaign, raising funds, selecting candidates and organising volunteers and rallies across India. Azad had criticised the Act for including a high proportion of un-elected members in the central legislature, and did not himself contest a seat. He again declined to contest elections in 1937, and helped head the party's efforts to organise elections and preserve coordination and unity amongst the Congress governments elected in different provinces.

At the 1936 Congress session in Lucknow, Azad was drawn into a dispute with right-wing Congressmen Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari regarding the espousal of socialism as the Congress goal. Azad had backed the election of Nehru as Congress President, and supported the resolution endorsing socialism. In doing so, he aligned with Congress socialists like Nehru, Subhash Bose and Jayaprakash Narayan. Azad also supported Nehru's re-election in 1937, at the consternation of many conservative Congressmen. Azad supported dialogue with Jinnah and the Muslim League between 1935 and 1937 over a Congress-League coalition and broader political cooperation. Less inclined to brand the League as obstructive, Azad nevertheless joined the Congress's vehement rejection of Jinnah's demand that the League be seen exclusively as the representative of Indian Muslims.

QUIT INDIA

In 1938, Azad served as an intermediary between the supporters of Gandhi and the Congress faction led by Congress President Subhash Bose, who criticised Gandhi for not launching another rebellion against the British and sought to move the Congress away from Gandhi's leadership. Azad stood by Gandhi with most other Congress leaders, but reluctantly endorsed the Congress's exit from the assemblies in 1939 following the inclusion of India in World War II. Nationalists were infuriated that the viceroy had entered India into the war without consulting national leaders. Although willing to support the British effort in return for independence, Azad sided with Gandhi when the British ignored the Congress overtures.

Azad's criticism of Jinnah and the League intensified as Jinnah called Congress rule in the provinces as "Hindu Raj," calling the resignation of the Congress ministries as a "Day of Deliverance" for Muslims. Jinnah and the League's separatist agenda was gaining popular support amongst Muslims. Muslim religious and conservative leaders criticised Azad as being too close to the Congress and placing politics before faith. As the Muslim League adopted a resolution calling for a separate Muslim state in its session in Lahore in 1940, Azad was elected Congress President in its session in Ramgarh. Speaking vehemently against Jinnah's Two-Nation Theory - the notion that Hindus and Muslims were distinct nations - Azad lambasted religious separatism and exhorted all Muslims to preserve a united India, as all Hindus and Muslims were Indians who shared deep bonds of brotherhood and nationhood. In his presidential address, Azad said:

> *"...Full eleven centuries have passed by since then. Islam has now as great a claim on the soil of India as Hinduism. If Hinduism has been the religion of the people here for several thousands of years Islam also has been their religion for a thousand years. Just as a Hindu can say with pride that he is an Indian and follows Hinduism, so also we can say with equal pride that we are Indians and follow Islam. I shall enlarge this orbit still further. The Indian Christian is equally entitled to say with pride that he is an Indian and is following a religion of India, namely Christianity."*

In face of increasing popular disenchantment with the British across India, Gandhi and Patel advocated an all-out rebellion demanding immediate independence. The situation had grown precarious as the Japanese conquered Burma and approached India's borders, which left Indians insecure but resentful of the British inability to protect India. Azad was wary and skeptical of the idea, aware that India's Muslims were increasingly looking to Jinnah and had supported the war. Feeling that a struggle would not force a British exit, Azad and Nehru warned that such a campaign would divide India and make the war situation even more precarious. Intensive and emotional debates took place between Azad, Nehru, Gandhi and Patel in the Congress Working Committee's meetings in May and June of 1942. In the end, Azad became convinced that decisive action in one form or another had to be taken, as the Congress had to provide leadership to India's people and would lose its standing if it did not.

Supporting the call for the British to "Quit India," Azad began exhorting thousands of people in rallies across the nation to prepare for a definitive, all-out struggle. As Congress President, Azad travelled across India and met with local and provincial Congress leaders and grass-roots activists, delivering speeches and planning the rebellion. Despite their previous differences, Azad worked closely with Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad to make the rebellion as effective as possible. On August 7, 1942 at the Gowalia Tank in Mumbai, Congress President Azad inaugurated the struggle with a vociferous speech exhorting Indians into action. Just two days later, the British arrested Azad and the entire Congress leadership. While Gandhi was incarcerated at the Aga Khan Palace in Pune, Azad and the Congress Working Committee were imprisoned at a fort in Ahmednagar, where they would remain under isolation and intense security for nearly four years. Outside news and communication had been largely prohibited and completely censored. Although frustrated at their incarceration and isolation, Azad and his companions attested to feeling a deep satisfaction at having done their duty to their country and people.

Azad occupied the time playing bridge and acting as the referee in tennis matches played by his colleagues. In the afternoons, Azad began working on his classic Urdu work, the

Ghubhar-i-Khatir. Sharing daily chores, Azad also taught the Persian and Urdu languages, as well as Indian and world history to several of his companions. The leaders would generally avoid talking of politics, unwilling to cause any arguments that could exacerbate the pain of their imprisonment. However, each year on January 26, the leaders would gather to remember their cause and pray together. Azad, Nehru and Patel would briefly speak about the nation and the future. Azad and Nehru proposed an initiative to forge an agreement with the British in 1943. Arguing that the rebellion had been mis-timed, Azad attempted to convince his colleagues that the Congress should agree to negotiate with the British and call for the suspension of disobedience if the British agreed to transfer power. Although his proposal was overwhelmingly rejected, Azad and a few others agreed that Gandhi and the Congress had not done enough. When they learnt of Gandhi holding talks with Jinnah in Mumbai in 1944, Azad criticised Gandhi's move as counter-productive and ill-advised.

PARTITION OF INDIA

With the end of the war, the British agreed to transfer power to Indian hands. All political prisoners were released in 1946 and Azad led the Congress in the elections for the new Constituent Assembly of India, which would draft India's constitution. He headed the delegation to negotiate with the British Cabinet Mission, in his sixth year as Congress President. While attacking Jinnah's demand for Pakistan and the mission's proposal of June 16, 1946 that envisaged the partition of India, Azad became a strong proponent of the mission's earlier proposal of May 16. The proposal advocated a federation with a weak central government and great autonomy for the provinces. Additionally, the proposal called for the "grouping" of provinces on religious lines, which would informally band together the Muslim-majority provinces.

While Gandhi and others were suspicious of this clause, Azad argued that the Jinnah's demand for Pakistan would be buried and the concerns of the Muslim community would be assuaged. Under Azad and Patel's backing, the Working Committee approved the resolution against Gandhi's advice. Jawaharlal Nehru replaced Azad as Congress President and led the Congress into the interim government. Azad was appointed to head the Department of Education. However, Jinnah's Direct Action Day agitation for Pakistan, launched on August 16 sparked communal violence across India. Thousands of people were killed as Azad travelled across Bengal and Bihar to calm the tensions and heal relations between Muslims and Hindus. Despite Azad's call for Hindu-Muslim unity, Jinnah's popularity amongst Muslims soared and the League entered a coalition with the Congress in December, but continued to boycott the constituent assembly.

Azad had grown increasingly hostile to Jinnah, who had described him as the "Muslim Lord Haw-Haw" and a "Congress Showboy." Despite being a learned scholar of Islam and a Maulana, Azad had been assailed by Muslim religious leaders for his commitment to nationalism and secularism, which were deemed un-Islamic. Muslim League politicians accused Azad of allowing Muslims to be culturally and politically dominated by the Hindu community. Azad continued to proclaim his faith in Hindu-Muslim unity:

"I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure is incomplete. I am an essential element, which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim."

Amidst more incidences of violence in early 1947, the Congress-League coalition struggled to function. The provinces of Bengal and Punjab were to be partitioned on religious lines, and on June 3, 1947 the British announced a proposal to partition India on religious lines, with the princely states free to choose between either dominion. The proposal was hotly debated in the All India Congress Committee, with Muslim leaders Saifuddin Kitchlew, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Maulana Hasrat Mohani expressing fierce opposition. Azad privately discussed the proposal with Gandhi, Patel and Nehru, but despite his opposition was unable to deny the popularity of the League and the unworkability of any coalition with the League. Faced with the serious possibility of a civil war, Azad abstained from voting on the resolution, remaining silent and not speaking throughout the AICC session, which ultimately approved the plan.

LEADING INDIA

India's partition and independence on August 15, 1947 brought with it a scourge of violence that swept the Punjab, Bengal, Kolkata, Delhi and many other parts of India. Millions of Hindus and Sikhs fled the newly created Pakistan for India, and large caravans of Muslims left for West Pakistan and East Pakistan, created out of East Bengal. Violence claimed the lives of an estimated one million people. Azad took up responsibility for the safety of Muslims in India, touring affected areas in Bengal, Bihar, Assam and the Punjab, guiding the organisation of refugee camps, supplies and security. Azad gave speeches to large crowds encouraging peace and calm in the border areas and encouraging Muslims across the country to remain in India and not fear for their safety and security. Focusing on bringing the capital of Delhi back to peace, Azad organised security and relief efforts, but was drawn into a dispute with the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel when he demanded the dismissal of Delhi's police commissioner, who was a Sikh accused by Muslims of overlooking attacks and neglecting their safety. Patel argued that the commissioner was not biased, and if his dismissal was forced it would provoke anger amongst Hindus and Sikhs and divide the city police. In Cabinet meetings and discussions with Gandhi, Patel and Azad clashed over security issues in Delhi and Punjab, as well as the allocation of resources for relief and rehabilitation. Patel opposed Azad and Nehru's proposal to reserve the houses vacated by Muslims who had departed for Pakistan for Muslims in India displaced by the violence. Patel argued that a secular government could not offer preferential treatment for any religious community, while Azad remained anxious to assure the rehabilitation of Muslims in India.

Maulana Azad had been appointed India's first Minister for Education and served in the Constituent Assembly to draft India's constitution. Azad's persuasion was instrumental in obtaining the approval of Muslim representatives to end the communal electorates, and was a forceful advocate of enshrining the principle of secularism, religious freedom and equality for all Indians. He supported provisions for Muslim citizens to make avail of Muslim personal law in courts.

Azad remained a close confidante, supporter and advisor to Prime Minister Nehru, and played an important role in framing national policies. Azad masterminded the creation of national programmes of school and college construction and spreading the enrollment of children and young adults into schools, in order to promote universal primary education. Elected to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, the Lok Sabha in 1952 and again in 1957, Azad supported Nehru's socialist economic and industrial policies, as well as the advancing social rights and economic opportunities for women and underprivileged Indians. In 1956, he served as president of the UNESCO General Conference held in Delhi. Azad spent the final years of his life focusing on writing his book India Wins Freedom, an exhaustive account of India's freedom struggle and its leaders, which was published in 1957.

CRITICISM AND LEGACY

During his life and in contemporary times, Maulana Azad has been criticised for not doing enough to prevent the partition of India. He was condemned by the advocates of Pakistan and by religious Muslims, especially of the Deobandi order for his perceived affinity and proximity to Hindus. During and after partition, Azad was criticised for not doing enough for Muslim security and political rights in independent India. However, Azad is remembered as amongst the leading Indian nationalists of his time. His firm belief in Hindu-Muslim unity earned him the respect of the Hindu community and he still remains one of the most important symbols of communal harmony in modern India. His work for education and social upliftment in India made him an important influence in guiding India's economic and social development.

Maulana Azad is the namesake of many public institutions across India such as the Maulana Azad Medical College in New Delhi, the Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology in Bhopal, the Maulana Azad National Urdu University and the Maulana Azad College in Kolkata. He is celebrated as the one of the founders and greatest patrons of the Jamia Millia Islamia. Azad's tomb is located next to the Jama Masjid in Delhi. In recent years great concern has been expressed by many in India over the

poor maintenance of the tomb. On November 16, 2005 the Delhi High Court ordered that the tomb of Maulana Azad in New Delhi be renovated and restored as a major national monument. Azad's tomb is a major landmark and receives large numbers of visitors annually.

Azad was the "Mir-i- Karawan" (the caravan leader), said Nehru. That he wasn't. Though not detached from the humdrum of political life, he was not cut out to be an efficient political manager. He was comfortable being a biographer rather than a leader of a movement. He was not somebody who traversed the dusty political terrain to stir the masses into activism. That is why he settled for Gandhi's leadership, acted as one of his lieutenants during the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930-32, and steered the Congress ship through the high tide of the inter-War years.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was born in the year 1888 in Mecca. His forefather's came from Herat (a city in Afghanistan) in Babar's days. Azad was a descendent of a lineage of learned Muslim scholars, or maulanas. His father's name was Maulana Khairuddin and his mother was the daughter of Sheikh Mohammad Zaher Watri.

In 1890, Azad's father moved to Calcutta. Educated according to the traditional curriculum, Azad learned Arabic and Persian first and then philosophy, geometry, mathematics and algebra. He was taught at home, first by his father, later by appointed teachers who were eminent in their respective fields. Seeing that English was fast becoming the international language, Azad taught himself to read, write and speak the language. He adopted the pen name "Azad" to signify his freedom from traditional Muslim ways.

Azad was introduced to the freedom struggle by revolutionary Shri Shyam Sunder Chakravarthy. Most revolutionaries in Bengal were Hindus. Azad greatly surprised his fellow Hindu revolutionaries with his willingness to join the freedom struggle. At first his peers were skeptical of his intentions.

Azad found the revolutionary activities restricted to Bengal and Bihar. Within two years, Azad helped setup secret revolutionary centers all over north India and Bombay.

Most revolutionaries were anti-Muslim because they felt that the British Government was using the Muslim community against India's freedom struggle. Azad tried to convince his colleagues that indifference and hostility toward the Muslims would only make the path to freedom more difficult.

Azad began publication of a journal called Al Hilal (the Crescent) in June 1912 to increase revolutionary recruits amongst the Muslims. The Al Hilal reached a circulation of 26,000 in two years. The British Government used the Press Act and then the Defense of India Regulations Act in 1916 to shut the journal down.

Azad roused the Muslim community through the Khilafat Movement. The aim of the movement was to re-instate the Khalifa as the head of British captured Turkey.

Azad supported Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement and joined the Indian National Congress (I.N.C) in January 1920. He presided over the special session of Congress in September 1923 and is said to be at the age of 35, the youngest man elected as the President of the Congress.

Azad was arrested in 1930 for violation of the salt laws as part of Gandhhiji's Salt Satyagraha. He was put in Meerut jail for a year and a half.

Azad was the staunchest opponent of partition of India into India and Pakistan. He supported a confederation of autonomous provinces with their own constitutions but common defense and economy, an arrangement suggested in the British Cabinet Mission Plan of May 1946. According to Azad partition was against the grain of the Indian culture which did not believe in "divorce before marriage." Partition shattered his dream of an unified nation where the Hindu and Muslim faiths would learn to co-exist in harmony.

Maulana Azad served as the Minister of Education in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet from 1947 to 1958. He died in August 1958. Azad was honored with the Bharat Ratna posthumously in 1992.

Mohiuddin Ahmad, better known as Abul Kalam Azad, played a leading role in the Indian struggle for independence and then later in the government of the India, remaining a symbol of the

Muslim will to coexist in a religiously diverse India. Among his many writings were his acclaimed Urdu translation and interpretation of the Qur'an.

He was born in Makkah in 1888 in an Indian family which had emigrated from the subcontinent, but they returned to settle in Calcutta in the mid 1890's. Azad studied at home, receiving his lessons from his father, Khairuddin Dihlawi, who was a sufi pir of the Qadiri and Naqshbandi orders, and from several other teachers. He received a thorough knowledge of the classical foundations of Islam, but the family atmosphere was extremely conservative and there was no room for the question "why", and Azad came to decide that the beliefs he had been brought up with were "nothing but taqlid of ancestors, devotion to ancient customs and inherited dogma."

The writings of Sayyid Ahmad Khan had a profound influence on Azad's religious and intellectual development, initially inciting him to be free from the limitations of the religion of his family, and then infused in him a passion for modern knowledge. He read profusely and claimed to have read nearly everything on modern knowledge published in Arabic. He was open to all sorts of trends of thought and belief but maintained that everything should be in moderation. Azad recognized that the Mu`tazilites and Sayyed faced similar challenges, each in their own time.

Azad felt that God called him to arouse the Muslims of India and persuade them to join the movement for political liberation. He began publishing his own newspaper al-Hilal (The Crescent Moon) in 1912 to arouse a new political consciousness, a desire for freedom in the religious class and a reverence for religion in the western-educated class. He called for a revival of the faith, to win the freedom represented by Islam, which was relevant to all aspects of life. He resisted, however, the establishment of Pakistan as a separate Muslim state. He went on to edit or co-edit numerous periodicals: Al-Balagh (Calcutta), 1915-16; Al-Hilal (Calcutta), 1912-14, 1927; Al-Jami`a (Calcutta), 1923-24; Al-Nadwa (Lucknow), 1905-6; Lisan al-Sidq (Calcutta), 1903-5; and Paigham (Calcutta), 1921.

He started a column in his journal al-Hilal on "scientific matters" (muzakira-e-`ilmiya) in February 1913 to make up for

what he considered Muslims' current lack of knowledge in all things scientific. He complained that western-educated Muslims could not believe that learned ulama studied philosophy thoroughly, and he criticized those BAs for their lack of a true love of knowledge, saying that no Aligarh graduates write books, translate great works, or make any contribution to knowledge. "Agnosticism used to be considered the result of the spread of learning But what shall we say of agnosticism which is now linked to sheer ignorance!" (Al-Hilal 2;16: p. 266-67). But though he was reluctant to admit the benefits of western education, and disdained the products of Aligarh, his columns on scientific matters focused on marvels of modern science. The article was on radium, followed by Scott's expedition to the South Pole, wherein he praised European devotion to science and the search for truth. He translated articles from Scientific American, the first was on Montessori educational methods.

Abul Kalam Azad was elected president of the Indian Congress in 1923, and was re-elected in 1940. He served as Gandhi's adviser in Muslim affairs. He was minister for education in Independent India from 1947 till his death. Imprisoned six times throughout his politically active life, he cherished his time in detention. At age 53, August 1942 he was imprisoned for the sixth time in Fort Ahmadnagar, having spent a total of ten and a half years in jail. He commented that "a seventh part of my life I have been detained. Thus the English gave me a fine Sabbath-rest".

In his early years, he had a derogatory attitude toward science. Later, he developed his idea that science is concerned with things that can be perceived by the senses, religion with the supra-sensual. He wrote "true science and true religion, although they travel on different paths, in the end arrive at the same destination" in Ghubar-e-Khatir, (pp. 146-49). He maintained that religion is the only source of moral values.

Azad avoided trying to find evidence of scientific theories in the Qur'an. In his Tarjuman, he said, "the aim of the Qur'an is to invite the attention of man to His power and wisdom and not to make an exposition of the creation of the universe" (SA 3. p. 572). The Qur'an contains things which the people of that time understood according to their own conceptions of life and custom,

and could not contain any discussion of the facts of science and history in it, because the people of the time had no comprehension of them. He maintained that the Qur'an is the ' word from God' (kalam min 'inda llah), rather than the 'word of God' (kalam Allah). In a collection of Azad's letters, published as Malfuzat-e-Azad, he states that we should understand the 'divine word' in the sense that it is divine (khuda'i), while at the same time being in the words of the Prophet.

On the problem of the existence of God, Azad based his solutions on intuition, rather than rational reasoning. Without God, there can be no understanding of the origin of life in the universe. There is only one solution to this problem. There is one way out of the maze. There is one piece to solve the puzzle. The problem of life in the universe is like a book with the first and last page missing; we know neither the beginning nor the end. If there is an omniscient being behind the curtain, everything has meaning; if not, all is dark. Azad also argued from the position that man is so superior to animals that he must have superior inspiration. Everything around him is distraction, but he aspires to higher things. This can only be the case if there is something higher in front of him, which can only be God. The natural answer to the search is inherent in man's nature; man's quest for rising higher is a natural search, for which the answer is God. He gives an example that in learning to talk, children need living examples, and this requirement is naturally met by the mother and father.

Without denying the validity of either religion or modern knowledge, he insisted that the realm of religious knowledge must be regarded as forbidden territory for reason. He insisted that modern knowledge must not be allowed to cut away what belongs to religion. He dissociated himself from both the modernist rejection of religious knowledge, and the ulama's lack of respect for modern knowledge. "I am compelled to separate myself from the religious reformers of today at this point, in spite of agreement on objectives and principles. Their position is that whatever traditions they find the least bit contrary to their self-made standards of reason, they are immediately anxious to reject…Why should tradition be rejected merely on this basis? Religious knowledge has its own standards for testing thought and tradition…You complain that the ulama pay no attention to modern affairs. But what you present to them is a pair of scissors, called by you 'mutual confirmation of the revealed and the reasoned', with which you thoughtlessly cut away. When you are ignorant of religious matters, and Arabic, they cannot respect you. Although personally, I think they are wrong in this attitude."(Al-Hilal 2;6: 85-6.)

Azad pursued questions of spirit and nature throughout his life. He concluded that the true relation between science and religion is not one of controversy but of harmonious coexistence and leads to the discovery of the actual existence of a Universal Religion, despite all the extant divergent rites and creeds. For this primary purpose, Azad wrote his commentary Tardjuman al-Qur'an (1930). This commentary is esteemed by Urdu readers because of the excellent Qur'an translation which it contains.

Azad died in New Delhi in 1958. He is buried in a simple tomb within a garden surrounded by a stone wall, between Jama Masjid and the Red Fort in the old city of Delhi.

The maker of phrases survives the maker of things in history. "There is nothing so swiftly forgotten," says Gore Vidal, "as the public's memory of a good action. This is why great men insist on putting up monuments to themselves with their deeds carefully recorded since those they served will not honour them in life or in death. Heroes must see to their own fame. No one else will."

A British historian of south Asia noticed how differently those who supported the movement for Pakistan have come to be remembered as compared with those who devoted themselves to Indian nationalism. Mohammad Iqbal's tomb of sandstone, lapis lazuli and white marble is a place of pilgrimage. Mohammed Ali Jinnah's mazar is a symbol of Pakistan's identity and one of the first places to which the visitor to Karachi is taken.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's mausoleum before the Jama Masjid in Delhi, on the other hand, is not greatly frequented. The relative neglect of his tomb suggests that many Indian Muslims may have lost interest in keeping his memory alive. It also suggests that Indian society as a whole may no longer value, as before, and perhaps may not even know the principles for which he stood.

It is not at all surprising why history books in Pakistan make no mention of Azad, except to echo the Quaid-i-Azam's view that he was a Muslim "show-boy" Congress president. What is surprising is how a man of Azad's stature has been submerged beneath the rationalisation of the victors -- the founders of Pakistan -- in our own country. This is the man whom Jawaharlal Nehru called "a very brave and gallant gentleman, a finished product of the culture that, in these days, pertains to few".

Azad was the Mir-i- Karawan (the caravan leader), said Nehru. That he wasn't. Though not detached from the humdrum of political life, he was not cut out to be an efficient political manager. He was comfortable being a biographer rather than a leader of a movement. He was not somebody who traversed the dusty political terrain to stir the masses into activism. That is why he settled for Gandhi's leadership, acted as one of his lieutenants during the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930-32, and steered the Congress ship through the high tide of the inter-War years.

He spent years in jail, where some of his prison colleagues thought of him as an "extraordinarily interesting companion", with "an astonishing memory" and encyclopaedic information. More importantly, a point is that the Maulana embodied in his position and person perhaps the most important symbol of the Congress aspiration to be a nationalist party. His status was thus the focal point of Gandhi's clash with Jinnah, who maintained that politically no one but a Muslim Leaguer could represent Muslim interests.

Sardar Patel, the hero of the Bardoli satyagraha and the home minister who carried the princely states to the burning ghat of oblivion, spoke and acted from the lofty heights of majoritarianism. Azad, caught up in the crossfire of Hindu and Muslim communalists, did not occupy the same vantage point. He had to play his innings on a sticky turf in rough weather. On occasions, his own party colleagues thwarted his initiatives and turned him into just a titular Congress head during, for example, the vital negotiations with both the Cripps and the Cabinet missions.

The strident Muslim Leaguers, on the other hand, decried him as a 'renegade'. Yet this elder statesman, sitting silently and impassively at Congress meetings, as he always did, with his

pointed beard, remained, until the end, consistent in his loyalty to a unified Indian nation. Time and time again, he repudiated Jinnah's two-nations theory. He reaffirmed: "It is one of the greatest frauds on the people to suggest that religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, economically, linguistically and culturally different." With an insight rare for those from his background, he pointed out that the real problems of the country were economic, not communal. The differences related to classes, not to communities.

Essentially a thinker and the chief exponent of Wahdat-i-deen or the essential oneness of all religions, Azad played around with a variety of ideas on religion, state and civil society. Thoughtful and reflective, he had a mind like a razor, which cut through a fog of ideas (Nehru).

Lesser men during his days found conflict in the rich variety of Indian life. But he was big enough not only to see the essential unity behind all that diversity but also to realise that only in unity was there hope for India as a whole. He was a man on the move, his eyes set on India's future which was to be fashioned on the basis of existing cross-community networks. His unfinished Tarjuman-al-Quran was easily the most profound statement on multiculturalism and inter-faith understanding. His political testament, delivered at the Congress session in 1940, was a neat and powerful summation of the ideology of secular nationalism:

"I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure is incomplete. I am an essential element, which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim."

To a region that has experienced the trauma of Partition the life of Azad shows how during the freedom struggle there were Muslims who worked for the highest secular ideals. To a region beset by religious intolerance the life of Azad reveals how the finest religious sensibility can fashion the most open and humane outlook in private and public life.

"Chalo aao tum ko dikhaain hum jo bacha hai maqtal-i-shehr
mein Yeh mazaar ah-i safa ke hain yeh hain ahl-i sidq ki turbatein

Come along, I will show you what remains in the city's slaughterhouse, These are the shrines of the pious, and here the graves of those with honesty and conviction."

A Glimpse of the Maulana

He was Minister of Education in the Government of India from 15th January 1947 till his death on the 22nd February 1958. A devote Muslim, he always stood for national unity and communal harmony.

National spirit was the driving force of his life. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, paying a tribute in the Indian Parliament on 24th February 1958 said 'so we mourn today the passing of a great man, a man of luminous intelligence and a mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to it score'.

Another Glimpse of the Maulana

Indian literature extolling our composite culture and heritage is vast. I recall particularly the seminal contributions of four prominent Indians, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad. Maulana Azad is one of the most erudite scholars of Islam in modern times. He was among the closest colleagues of Mahatma Gandhi and a front-rank leader of the Indian Freedom Movement. In his presidential address to the plenary session of the Indian National Congress in 1940, he said:

> *"I am a Muslim and profoundly conscious of the fact that I have inherited Islam's glorious traditions of the last thirteen hundred years. I am not prepared to lose even a small part of that legacy...I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian, an essential part of the invisible unity of Indian nationhood, a vital factor in its total make-up without which its noble edifice will remain incomplete. I can never give up this sincere claim. It was India's historic destiny that its soil should become the destination of many different caravans of races, cultures and religions. Even before the dawn of history's morning, they started their trek into India and the process has continued since."*

MAULANA AZAD : AMBASSADOR OF HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

He was a peculiar and very special representative in a high degree of that great composite culture which has gradually grown in India. I do not mean to say that everybody has to be like Maulana Azad to represent that composite culture. There are many representatives of it in various parts of India; but he, in his own venue, here in Delhi or in Bengal or Calcutta, where he spent the greater part of his life, represented this synthesis of various cultures which have come one after another to India, rivers that had flowed in and lost themselves in the ocean of Indian life, India's humanity, affecting them, changing them, and being changed themselves by them….. " So spoke Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the 1st Maulana Azad memorial lecture on 11th November, 1959. The Maulana was a great religious scholar, journalist, writer, poet, philosopher and above all, a great political leader whose services and sacrifices in the freedom struggle will be long remembered alongwith his matchless contribution as free India's first Education Minister.

Feroz Bakht (fortunate), later to become famous as Maulana Azad, was born in Mecca on 11th November, 1888 - an year before Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He mastered many subjects at a very young age. There were learned tutors to teach him Arabic, Persian, Urdu and religious subjects alongwith mathematics, the Unani system of medicine, calligraphy, and other subjects. Learning of English was, of course, not allowed to him as it was 'the language of the hated Firangis (the Britishers)'. Fortunately, he met a gentleman who knew English and in no time he learnt the alphabet and the first reader from him. Very soon he started reading the Bible and the newspapers with the help of dictionaries.

He used to read late into the night in dim candle-light, early in the morning, and sometimes even missed his meals. He often spent his money on books. He mentioned : "People pass their childhood in playing but I, at the age of twelve or thirteen, used to pick up a book and slip into a remote corner trying to hide myself from people's looks." As for his writing, a great scholar wrote : "Like Somerset Maugham (an eminent English writer) Maulana Azad learnt writing as a fish learns swimming or a child learns breathing." A unique quality about him was that he always

remained much ahead of his age, in years, in many fields. He was running a library, a reading room, a debating society before he was twelve! He was teaching a class of students, most of whom were twice his age, when he was merely fifteen. He edited a number of magazines between thirteen and eighteen years of age and himself brought out a magazine of high standard at the age of sixteen. The power of his writings shaped in no small measure, the pattern of thought and political values of the Indian youth of his day. Maulana's Tarjuman-al-Quran is a classic in Muslim religious literature. According to one of his biographers, S.G. Haider, Urdu-speaking people once invited a 'learned scholar', whose writings they had read with admiration, to address a national-level conference in 1904.

But when a lean and thin, unbearded, fair-complexioned Maulana Azad, barely sixteen, alighted from the first compartment, thousands of his admirers at the Lahore railway station could not believe their eyes. Some were even disappointed. And when this 'boy' gave a memorable extempore speech, for more than two and a half hours, the President, Maulana Hali, well-known sixty-seven-year-old poet and scholar himself, hugged him lovingly, saying : "….. of course, my dear boy, I now believe my senses, but am not yet able to overcome my utter surprise." Maulana felt that for some reasons, the Muslims had fallen behind their brothers, in many ways, after the freedom struggle of 1857. Many of them thought that India would always remain under the British rule and, therefore, there was no need to fight against it. But Maulana told them, through his writings, that to be free from the slavery of foreign rule was not merely a national cause, it was also their religious duty.

He once declared : "It is easier for the Muslims to make peace with scorpions and snakes, move into the mountains, caves and burrows and make peace with the beasts there, but it is not possible for them to beg for truce with the Britishers." To spread this message he brought out his own famous weekly paper Al-Hilal in 1912. How soon this paper became famous in India and abroad seems like a marvel now. Within a few months Al-Hilal's circulation reached 26,000! Groups of people used to read or listen to each and every printed word of it like a lesson in a classroom. Very

soon the paper created a new wave of awakening not only among Muslims but among others too as there were many Urdu-readers then. At least the Government forfeited the securities of Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 10,000 of the Al-Hilal and finally turned Maulana Azad out of Bengal for his anti-government writings. Later, he was imprisoned in Ranchi, Bihar, for more than four years.

Mahatma Gandhi, who knew about Maulana's powerful writings, wanted to meet him when Maulana was in Ranchi prison. The Government did not allow him to. Soon after his release, in January 1920 - Maulana met Gandhiji at Hakim Ajmal Khan's residence, in Delhi. Recalling this meeting Maulana wrote later : "…..To this day ….. as if we have lived under the same roof…… We had differences also …… but we never went different ways…….with every passing day my faith in him became stronger and stronger." On the other hand, Gandhiji said : "I have the pleasure of working with Maulana since 1920…..His love for the country is as strong as his faith in Islam. He is one of the greatest leaders of the Indian National Congress. One should never forget it….." Maulana believed from the very beginning that Indians can make a strong nation only when they have unity among themselves. Like Mahatma Gandhi, there was nothing dearer to his heart than the unity of the people.

Like his 'Guru', who ultimately sacrificed his life for this cause, Maulana was prepared to sacrifice everything for the unity of the nation. In his first presidential address to the Indian National Congress (1923), he declared in his peculiarly beautiful style in Urdu : "Today, if an angel descends from the sky and declared from the heights of Delhi's Qutub Minar that India can get Swaraj in twenty-four hours provided she gives up the idea of Hindu-Muslim unity, I will forego the Swaraj rather than the Hindu-Muslim unity, because if Swaraj is delayed it will be a loss of India alone but if this unity is lost it will be a loss of the entire humanity of the world." Late in the night of August 8, 1942, the historic meeting of the AICC, under the presidentship of the Maulana, gave the 'Quit India' call to the British Government. Early next morning all the great leaders were seen in the compartment of a special train. The train stopped at Poona and Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu, escorted by a number of police officers, alighted.

In the afternoon, Maulana, along with his colleagues was taken to the historic fort at Ahmednagar.

He wrote to his friend from there : "Only nine months earlier……the gate of Naini Central Jail was opened before me (to let me out) and yesterday, the 9th August 1942, the new gate of the old Ahmednagar fort was closed behind me." The next day he wrote : "This is the sixth experience…..the total period of the last five terms….will-total to ……seven years and eight months…..this…..comes to a seventh part of the fifty-three years I have so far lived." At the end of this term (July 1945), the total period of his imprisonment became ten years and five months. Maulana Azad always remained consistent to the beliefs with which he began his life : uncompromising faith in the Quran and total commitment to the principle of Hindu-Muslim unity.

He became the President of the Congress three times. Besides becoming the youngest President in 1923, he led the Congress for more than six years in his last term from 1940 to 1946. This was not only the longest period of Presidentship in the pre-Independence days, it was also the most crucial time in the history of the Congress when, under his presidentship the Congress passed the historic 'Quit India' resolution which was moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and seconded by Sardar Patel. India achieved its freedom on 15th August, 1947. The country was divided. The Maulana was dejected as his dream of united India was shattered. However, when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru offered him the education portfolio in his cabinet Maulana Azad readily accepted the offer and despite his poor health spared no effort in sharing the burden of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru towards building modern India. Raising the level of literacy was given the highest priority. Thousands of new schools, colleges and universities were started throughout the length and breadth of the country.

The Maulana also established many great institutions like the Sahitya Akademi, the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the Lalit Kala Akademi, and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, to give a new life to India's great culture. Maulana Azad died on Feb. 22, 1958. It was a loss deeply and widely felt in the country. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru paying glowing tributes to the Maulana in Parliament said : "We have had great men and we will have great men, but the peculiar and special kind of greatness that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else."

GHALIB & MAULANA AZAD DEBATE

Quite an interesting debate is going on in India these days whether Maulana Azad was the reincarnation of Ghalib or not. Actually it is Maulana Azad's desire to equate himself with Ghalib - expressed in so many ways - which has been made the basis for this intriguing kite-flying.

Atiq Siddiqui's book Ghalib Aur Abul Kalam, published in 1969, Ghalib centenary year - had gone a long way in establishing Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as the first serious writer who paved the way for the revival of Ghalib in the 20th century. Maulana Azad's trend-setting weekly, Al-Hilal, was the first journal to bring Ghalib out of the cold storage of our general apathy towards the great men of our literature. Maulana Azad thought it proper to bring to light the unpublished verses of Mirza Ghalib in Al-Hilal in three instalments in 1914 and took the Urdu world by storm.

Up till then only the Persian Kulliyats of Ghalib had incorporated new additions to Ghalib's Persian poetry but the Urdu Diwan - the one which is called Diwan-i-Ghalib today - different from Nuskha-i-Hamidya and Nuskha-i-Arshi - which contain quite a bulk of Ghalib's rejected verses - came under the axe of its editors - Mufti Sadruddin Azurda, Maulana Fazl-i-Haq Khairabadi and Imam Bakhsh Sehbai. Ghalib did not want to discuss the rejected verses and thought them to be unworthy of any discussion though it is quite another story that some of these 'rejected verses' contain such couplets as:

Hai kahan tamanna ka doosra qadam ya rab,/Ham ne dasht-i-imkan ko ek naqhsh-i-pa paya. Gham-i-firaq mein takleef-i-sair-i-gul mat do,/ Mujhe dimagh nahin khanda hai bay ja ka.

Not only the above couplets but there are so many more outstanding couplets of Ghalib - as furnished by Dr Farman Fatehpuri in his latest book, Taabirat-i-Ghalib, published by Ghalib Academy, Karachi. Dr Fatehpuri proves that the three editors of

Ghalib's standard Diwan left out scores of highly imaginative couplets. Dr Farman Fatehpuri has thrown ample light on the contention that Ghalib's Diwan excluded couplets written in Abdul Qadir Bedil's style of poetry.

The other publications of Ghalib Academy bring to light many an important aspect of Ghalib's life to broad daylight. However what has surprised me most is why Maulana Abul Kalam Azad became the first highly important writer and politician to draw the attention of Ghalib's fans in an editorial of Al-Hilal - dated 17 June 1914, using a language which could be termed 'fantastic' if not by hyperbolic. Ghalib's first introducer was Nawab Ziauddin Khan Nayyar, the second Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the third Nawab Mustafa Khan Shaifta and then Khub Chand Zaka, Azam-ud-Daula Suroor and then Muhammad Husain Azad - though a bit adversarially. Hali scored over each of them in his Yaadgar-i-Ghalib. His hero was flawless.

While Hali is usually brushed aside as a disciple who was not capable of seeing any black spot in Ghalib's character, Maulana Azad opened his account by admitting that Hali was a partisan and was exuberant in Ghalib's eulogy. But Maulana Azad used Al-Hilal to present Ghalib as the finest example of Urdu's poetic imagination. He also wrote notes on Maulana Ghulam Rasool Mahar's book Ghalib, published in 1936 and he went on writing notes in the margins of the same book up to 1940. They were finally published by Ghulam Rasool Mahar as Naqsh-i-Azad.

What makes me take up Maulana Azad's fascination with Azad to the extent that whatever he thought, wrote and did was generally ascribed by him as a simple Taqlid or recurrence of Ghalib's acts. Be it the Azad's beginning as a poet at the age of 12-13 or his general temperament, he would make us regard as an exact correspondence with Ghalib's doings. Scores of incidents in Maulana Azad's life could be cited, which for Maulana Azad, were similar to the incidents which happened to Ghalib. Ghalib appears to be suffering from narcissism; and so does Maulana Azad so much so that Malik Ram thought that Ghalib's soul had, perhaps, transmigrated into Maulana Azad. Quite an interesting comment! Maulana became so enamoured of Ghalib that the best compliment which could get an affirmative nod from him was

"Maulana, you are very much like Ghalib. Your literary taste, your deep thinking, your mighty pride and your sense of propriety lead to one conclusion that you are nothing but Ghalib." Maulana would only smile and his close companions affirmed that he won't be very much perturbed by such fantastic leap of imagination.

Maulana Azad has recounted in one of his articles that even when he got a jail term in Delhi he imagined that he should get the same room in which Ghalib was imprisoned. Not only this, Maulana Azad recounts his father, Maulana Khairuddin's discipleship of Mufti Sadruddin Azurda and Maulana Fazle Haq Khairabadi, both of them were functionaries of the East India Company at one point of time. Mufti Sadruddin became Sadrus Sudoor after 1857 as well. Maulana Azad's father's maternal grandfather - Maulvi Munawwaruddin - was a disciple of Shah Abdul Aziz, son of Shah Waliullah, and Maulana Azad does not spare him from criticism, saying that Shah Abdul Aziz had allowed his son-in-law, Maulvi Abdul Hai, to serve as Sadr-i-Adalat in Meerut court disregarding his Fatwa that no Muslim should serve the East India Company. He thinks that Shah Abdul Aziz had issued several contradictory statements and it was really unfortunate that a great scion of Shah Waliullah could be interpreted both ways - for and against the British. This is possibly the very important issue on which Maulana Azad has put his finger.

How strange that Maulana Azad brings out scores of reasons to suggest that Ghalib's liking for Calcutta (Kolkata), in spite of the general opinion that it was not a good place for health and eastern values. He also supports his contention that Ghalib's family, particularly the House of Loharu, was pro- British and Ghalib's association with Azurda and Maulana Fazlul Haq Khairabadi, whose brother Munshi Fazle-Azeem was a Deputy Collector and two of his relatives were serving with the British resident were also close to the British. This was possibly the reason that Ghalib was destined to like Calcutta, a city of western moorings, much more than was the case with the persons of traditional outlook could. Ghalib's Taqriz of Sir Syed's edition of Aain-i-Akbari was also due to the same reason that he was mentally not averse to the western society of Calcutta.

With Maualna Azad's articles in Al-Hilal, Naqsh-i-Azad, Atiq Siddiqui's book Ghalib Aur Abul Kalam and the new writings on Azad and Ghalib it is becoming clear that even a pro-West or modern poet like Ghalib did not go to the Red Fort after 1857 where the Delhi aristocracy was thronging in to record its loyalty to the East India Company and was thus charged with sedition. He remained in his house, lamenting the fall of the House of Timur.

Had it not occurred to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to go to the Red Fort and impress upon the British officials that Ghalib had no hand in the 1857 'mutiny,' Ghalib could get a death sentence because the charge of sedition was being argued quite forcefully. Maulana Azad has brought this fact on record in Al-Hilal.

Now the Ghalib scholars will have to revise their view that it was Dr Abdur Rahman Bijnori who introduced Ghalib in a big way. Perhaps Dr Bijnori did it in response to the fervour which Maulana Azad's Al-Hilal writings had created. It is a pity that Maulana Azad's writings on Ghalib were not given due attention because of the fact that greater attention was paid to his political and religious writings and it was easier to ignore the story of Ghalib's transmigration into Maulana Azad.

Azad grew up in a religious and scholarly family. His father was a pir (or Sufi spiritual guide). After his father's death 1909, Azad renounced his inherited role in institutional Sufism in favor of journalism and activism. He moved to Calcutta and joined the activist movement against the partition of Bengal after 1905 andBritish wars against the Ottoman Empire which led to the founding of colonial regimes in Iraq and other Arab lands. He established the journals al-Hilal in 1912 and al-Balagh in 1915. Through them, Azad denounced a class of worldly Muslim scholars who cooperated with the British colonial administration. During this activist period, he also created a political cell called Jami'at Hizbullah, "The Party of God," in 1913 in Calcutta, in an effort to engage political issues through both the publicity of words and the pressure of deeds.

Revolutionary politics failed, and Azad established an "educational" institute in 1915, Dar al-Irshad, which he hoped would reform religious education, foster independent thinking, and form a foundation for political activism (Muhibbul Hasan, Islam and Indian Nationalism, 164). Through this educational institute, Azad pleaded for Muslim scholars enter into political service in the nationalist movement. But his institution building failed. His journals were censored by the British colonial state and his presses were confiscated. These political and journalistic activities landed Azad in jail by 1916.

While incarcerated, Azad had plenty of time to contemplate the Qur'an and to write. He composed his Tarjuman al-Qur'an, a Qur'an commentary and translation, that was published in 1930. During this time of writing, he turned simultaneously inward, toward community building, and also outward toward a more universal embracing of cooperation with Sikhs and Hindus. This theological inquiry meshed with his new political alliance with the Indian Congress Party. The search for a moral community was a dire need as British resistance to the nationalist struggle engendered communal rivalries. At his time, direct political action rallied on many fronts, and new leaders came to the fore. Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1919, and by 1920 Azad and Gandhi along with Abdul Ghaffar Khan launched the non-cooperation and the Khilafat movement. This intersection of nationalist and religious leaders marked the high point of Muslim-Hindu unity in the face of British imperialism.

In this exploration for political possibilities, Azad delved into the concept of the Qur'an as guidance. In Azad's mature vision, Divine guidance is immanent in Allah's creating and sustaining of the cosmos moment-by-moment. In the Tarjuman, Azad elevates guidance to an abstract concept that orders the whole Qur'anic scriptural revelation and, if properly acted upon, can harmonize all divergent religious communities. Azad's horizons have expanded; he sees himself not only as the spokesman for the Muslim community, but also as a leader of inter-faith peace rooted in the Qur'anic concepts of divine revelation, inspiration and continual renewal. In this way, he constructs a systematic theology that grounds Abdul Ghaffar's experiments in a sustained reading of the Qur'an.

Azad asserts that Divine Guidance is ever-present, and is given directly from God within the sociological parameters of

present history. Those people are guided who struggle to make the Qur'an relevant and applicable within their immediate circumstances. This application is not manifested through literal reading, but rather comes into being through the personality of the reformer: through inner conviction, material habits, pious practices, and political positions. In other words, guidance only comes through the text of revelation when the heart is inspired directly by rububiyat and rahmat, by the Divine's transcendent absolute superiority and imminent merciful presence.

At first humankind lived a natural life. There was neither mutual rivalry among them nor enmity between one and the another…It was at a subsequent stage when they multiplied and economic pressure gave rise among them to conflict of interests resulting in the oppression of the weak that society came to be divided into groups on the basis of interests, each hating the other. The situation demanded the delivery of a message of truth and justice. It was thus that the door of prophethood or Revelation opened, and a series of prophets followed in succession to bring home to mankind the truth which they had neglected and suffered in consequence (Azad, Tarjuman al-Quran, 1:153).

The greatest evil and obstacle in path of this guidance is "group formation" or chauvinism, which leads to a degeneration of both dogma and moral actions. The Qur'an points the way to regain this unity, through reconciliation and devotion to one God, through the exercise of righteous reformers.

In the pursuit of this mission [of bringing the participants of all religious traditions back to a single Truth], the Qur'an brings to mind the falling off from truth. This falling off is in the sphere of doctrinal beliefs, as well as in that of action. Of the several forms which this has taken, the most serious to which the Qur'an draws pointed attention is the basis of religion which it styles tashayyu` [professing partisanship] or group formation...The result was that man [sic] did not lay stress on faith and action as the basis of salvation, as much as on the way one group's interest differed from that of another. That came to be the test of truth in religion and the determining factor for salvation. Exclusivism came then into vogue everywhere, denying salvation to all except those who belong to one's own group. In fact, hatred of another's religion

replaced devotion to God and righteous living (Azad, Tarjuman al-Qur'an 1:162).

Those who uphold their group (whether it is a religious sect, legal school, ruling dynasty, or ethnic community), rather than enacting the Qur'anic urge toward unity and reconciliation, miss the always-extended Divine Guidance.

Such groups pursue only their narrow sectarian interests, and become mired in competing interests, schemes and machinations. Ultimately they sink into the suffering of the world that they tried to escape through forming an exclusive group and asserting their claims against others through coercive power.

In contrast, those who call upon their communities to respect some limits and to harmonize with other potentially competitive groups, they are rightly guided, kept flexible and fresh, and ultimately achieve some level of justice in this world and salvation in the next world.

In Azad's exposition of the Qur'an, Revelation is a single message sent at various times to diverse people through a multiplicity of languages.

Revelation reminds every people to return to the root principles of their religion: to do good, prevent the self and others from doing harm, to take responsibility for one's actions, to bring oneself into a state of integrity and one's community into a state of unity and cooperative coexistence. Azad joins this concept of transcendent with the central Qur'anic injunction to activist ethics: to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil (Qur'an 3:17).

He stresses that good is signified by the term ma'ruf, which means the known, while evil is signified by the term munkir, the unacceptable. These two categories of action are distinguished by the primary guidance given by the Creator through the act of creation. Knowing what is good and what is unacceptable is the foundation for the universal din, the basic religious urge within human nature.

This ethical impulse is intrinsic to human nature instilled through the very event of creation, and thus it can not be contained exclusively by a particularistic shari`ah, or possessed by a set of scriptural injunctions, or defined by legal terms and ritual customs.

Thus in Azad's view, the ethical core of the Qur'an is not dependent on the evils of group formation, exclusivity and chauvinism; the Qur'an neither contradicts nor precludes the ultimate reality posited by other religious communities.

Azad describes how true religious devotion combats divisions and group-formations. The historical path of religion has passed from an originally united community, through disagreement, disunity and variation, and then moved on into the period of revelation, which lays the basis for future reconciliation and reunion.

All belonged to one order, but they have divided themselves into diverse classes--rich and poor, high and low...In such a situation, what link may be forged to set aside these distinctions and bring all mankind together once again? The Qur'an says that such a link is possible to forge and that it is a return to the devotion to one God (Azad, Tarjuman al-Qur'an, 1:183).

In Azad's theology, "return to the devotion to one God" does not mean conversion to any particular religion. It means the recognition in each person or group that others are one of the same creation, deserving of the same rights and privileges, demanding the same accountability and responsibility. The multiplicity of religious communities is a positive good, as it challenges believers to vie with each other in good deeds. He cites the Qur'an to this point:

To each among you We have proscribed a religious law and a clear way of acting. If Allah had so willed, Allah would have made you all of one community. But Allah would test you by what Allah has given to each of you groups. So rival each other in performing good deeds! To Allah will you all return. Allah alone will show you the truth in matters over which you differ and dispute (Qur'an 5:51).

Unity within diversity was what Azad saw was the sole purpose of religion, each religion in particular and religion in general.

The unity of humankind is the primary aim of religion. The message which every prophet delivered was that humankind is in reality one people and one community, and that there was but

one God for all of them, and that on that account they should serve God together and live as members of one family. Such was the message which every religion delivered.

But curiously the followers of each religion disregarded the message, so much so that every country, every community and every race resolved itself into a separate group and raised groupism to the position of religion...There is nothing in the Qur'an on which so great a stress is placed as on this view of life. It is repeatedly made clear that it does not favor any exclusive group religion. Conversely, it asserts that it has come to put an end to all groupism...The divine Truth, says the Qur'an, is a universal gift from God.

It is not exclusive to any race or any people or any religious group. It is not exclusively delivered in any particular language. You have no doubt created for yourselves national, geographical and racial boundaries. But you cannot so divide the divine truth…Do not worship your communities, homelands, languages or your group formations. You should worship only God (Azad, Tarjuman al-Qur'an, 1:168-72).

Azad's reading of the Qur'an takes advantage of the subtleties of the Arabic language, which Azad knew well. In his exposition, as in Arabic, to worship means to serve.

To worship God was to serve God through serving God's creation. His theological speculation meshed with his public service and political activism. He joined the Congress Party and rejected as idolatrous chauvinism the British notion that they had divine right to rule through their particular civilizational genius. He was Gandhi's primary mediator with the Indian Muslim community, and urged them to participate in Gandhi's non-violent activism against British rule.

Azad struggled to live out these religious ideals to forge a peaceful unity out of a belligerent diversity. He served as the elected president of the Indian Congress Party for six crucial and dangerous years, from 1939-1946.

He tried to engineer a rapprochement between the Muslim League that advocated a separate nation for Muslims and the Congress which advocated a united India. In 1946, Azad suggested

a federal system with a weak central government in which Muslim majority provinces would have robust autonomy.

Sadly, when Nehru succeeded Azad as Congress President, he subverted this plan and repudiated the Congress's commitment to a United Federal India, called the "Cabinet Mission Plan." By discarding this plan, the Muslim League was forced to assert its demand for a separate state and communal riots broke out. At the outbreak of WWII, in 1940, Indian nationalist leaders were confronted by a conflict that revealed their different philosophies about non-violence.

The British asked Indian nationalists to post-pone their drive for Indian independence in order to contribute to the defeat of Axis powers. Azad was the Congress party president and wrote:

We were affected by the world-shaking events outside. Even more disturbing were the differences among ourselves. I…sought to take India into the camp of democracies if only India were free. The only obstacle in our way was India's bondage.

For Gandhiji, however, it was not so. For him, the issue was one of pacifism and not of India's freedom. I declared openly that the Indian National Congress was not a pacifist organization but one for achieving India's freedom…Gandhiji, however, would not change his view. He was convinced that India ought not to take part in the war in any circumstance.

For me, non-violence was a matter of policy, not of creed. My view was that Indians had the right to take to the sword if they had no other alternative. It would, however, be nobler to achieve independence through peaceful methods, and in any case in the circumstances which obtained in the country, Gandhiji's method was right…Gandhiji's argument is irresistible. We take up arms for defense but we use them finally for aggression. This is what happened with Islam.

The Prophet took up arms for sheer self-defense, but his followers used them for aggression and conquest. We realize that we cannot go full length with Gandhiji. Non-violence, however, must remain our anchor for the freedom struggle and for coping with internal disorders (Tendulkar, 463).

Azad saw non-violence as tactical not absolute. For him it was the best way to achieve independence against British domination that was based on the arrogance of assumed legitimacy and superiority. But it was not an ethical response to foreign invasion, as threatened by the Japanese, which was based on raw aggression. Most Congress Party leaders, whether Hindu, Muslim, Parsi or Sikh, agreed with Azad.

After this discussion in 1940, Gandhi resigned from leadership positions in the Congress Party because he felt that, by trying to achieve independence through pledging to help fight in WWII, the party was loosing its commitment to non-violence. Abdul Ghaffar Khan had initially sided with Azad's argument, but later sided with Gandhi and also resigned from congress leadership. He and Gandhi held up the Khudai Khidmatgar movement as the only successfully sustained example of non-violence social transformation.

Some recent resolutions of the Working Committee (of the Congress Party) indicate that they are restricting the use of non-violence to the fight for India's freedom against constituted authority [the colonial government]…I should like to make it clear that the non-violence I have believed in a and preached to my brethren of the Khudai Khidmatgars is much wider. It affects all our life and only that has permanent value…We shall never really and effectively defend ourselves except through non-violence. The Khudai Khidmatgars must, therefore, be what our name implies--servants of God and humanity--by laying down our own lives and never taking any life.

So during this crucial period leading up to independence, Azad and Abdul Ghaffar converged and then diverged. The ethical scope of their non-violence was different, though it had a common source. However, from our vantage point long after their disagreement, Azad and Abdul Ghaffar seem like complementary figures. While both combined theology and praxis, Abdul Ghaffar was always more of a grass-roots organizer and rabble-rouser while Azad was more of an eloquent statesman and systematic theologian. Azad had an easier time accommodating himself to institutional positions of authority, and served as the Education Minister in independent India. In contrast, Abdul Ghaffar

considered the Pakistan government as unjust and oppressive as the British colonial government had been and could never come to terms with it.

The Indian Congress Party's goal of an integral India free of British rule did not come to pass, for complex reasons. The British tried to play Hindus off Muslims in a policy of divide-and-rule, while communalist Hindus and communalist Muslims clashed in escalating riots. Partition between Pakistan and India happened in the midst of horrific violence and displacement. Abdul Ghaffar Khan eventually reconciled to living in Pakistan, whose government ruled his province.

He served briefly in the Pakistan parliament, but by demanding autonomy for each province he was soon charged with sedition and jailed. In his brief terms out of prison, he founded a new political party: the Pakistan People's Party. After more time in jail, he moved to a life in exile in Afghanistan where he died, still campaigning for human rights for his people even at the age of 95.

It might be easy to romanticize these two personalities from the era of the Indian struggle for independence. It was an era that inspired great sacrifices and noble ideals. A skeptic might argue that their non-violent activism depended on revolutionary effervescence of their times, and is therefore limited to that time. This would be, in my assessment, and under-estimation of the power of their ideas and their firm rooting in the Qur'anic scriptural discourse. Some Muslim activists are still inspired by these ideas and see themselves as perpetuating the movement initiated by Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Azad.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad ranks among the top builders of modern India and among the top freedom fighters, who dedicated his entire life to liberate India from the British colonial rule. Much has been written about this prince among Indians of his century. He was not only enlightened, erudite, wise and humble, he was also a man who often led from the front and set personal examples for others. Much has been written about Azad in the last six decades. Today let us explore how some top Indian leaders viewed him, and what were his own views.

How Others Viewed Azad

Mahatma Gandhi: "Maulana Azad is the most forceful, truthful, and fearless satyagrahi and fighter against oppression and injustice that I have come across".

Jawaharlal Nehru: "Though I am grateful to all my companions, I would like to mention especially Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, whose erudition has delighted me incredibly, and has sometimes overwhelmed me. In Azad along with the good qualities of the past, the graciousness, the deep learning and tolerance, there is a strange and unique mixture of the urges of today and the modern outlook".

"Maulana Azad was a very special representative in a high degree, of the great composite culture which has gradually grown in India. He represented the synthesis of various cultures which had flown in and lost themselves in the ocean of Indian life and humanity, affecting and changing them and being changed themselves by them. In that sense, I can hardly conceive of any other person who can replace him, because the age which produced him is past."

Azad's Own Views

"I am a Muslim and profoundly conscious of the fact that I have inherited Islam's glorious tradition of the last fourteen hundred years. I am not prepared to loose even a small part of that legacy. The history and teachings of Islam, its arts and letters, its culture and civilization are part of my wealth and it is my duty to cherish and guard them. But, with all these feelings, I have another equally deep realization, born out of my life's experience which is strengthened and not hindered by the Islamic spirit. I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian, an essential part of the indivisible unity of the Indian nationhood, a vital factor in its total makeup, without which this noble edifice will remain incomplete."

" If the whole world is our country and is to be honored, the dust of India has the first place. If all mankind are our brothers, then the Indians have the first place."

"Not only is our national freedom impossible without Hindu-Muslim unity, we also can not create without it, the primary

principles of humanity. If an angel were to tell me: 'Discard Hindu-Muslim unity and within 24 hours I will give freedom to India' I would prefer Hindu-Muslim unity. For the delay in the attainment of freedom will be a loss to India alone, but if the Hindu-Muslim unity disappears, that will be a loss to the whole humanity."

"It was India's historic destiny that many human races, cultures, and religions should flow to her, and that many a caravan should find rest here... One of the last of these caravans was that of the followers of Islam. This came here and settled for good. In India everything bears the stamp of the joint endeavors of the Hindus and Muslims. Our languages were different, but we grew to use a common language. Our manners and customs were dissimilar, but they produced a new synthesis. No fantasy or artificial scheming to separate and divide us can break this unity."

6

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: A Revolutionary Journalist

"If an angel were to descend from the clouds today, settle on the Qutub Minar of Delhi and proclaim from there that India will attain Swaraj provided Hindu-Muslim Unity is renounced, then I would renounce Swaraj and not sacrifice Hindu-Muslim Unity, because if Swaraj is delayed, it is the loss to India, but if Hindu-Muslim Unity is lost, it is the loss to humanity."

These were the words of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at the Presidential Address of the Congress Session in 1923. The analogy and juxtaposition of Swaraj and inter-communal harmony that Maulana Azad emphasized then is equally pertinent today. Maulana Azad, as it can be inferred from his above quoted statement, was a strong campaigner of peace and a vociferous freedom fighter. He used the power of his writings and public orations to create a national awakening among the masses. We shall briefly examine some of his prominent journalistic contributions which served as milestones in the Indian freedom struggle.

Born on November 11, 1888 in a deeply orthodox Muslim family, Maulana Azad had his initial formal education in Arabic, Persian and Urdu with theological orientation. He also learnt English on his own. But Maulana Azad had a natural inclination for writing and this resulted in the miraculous start of the monthly "Nairang-e-Alam" in 1899 at Calcutta when he was hardly eleven years old. The periodical carried the poetical collection of the contemporary poets. This was followed by the launch of the weekly "Al-Misbah" in 1900 which carried articles on contemporary issues.

But the genesis of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's revolutionary journalism was in 1908. This was the time when he undertook an extensive visit of Egypt, Turkey, Syria and France. In Egypt, Maulana Azad came into contact with the followers of Mustafa Kemal Pasha who were publishing a weekly from Cairo. In Turkey, Maulana Azad met the leaders of the Young Turks Movement. The contacts between Maulana Azad and the leaders of Movement were further cemented by the exchange of letters between them which continued years after his return to India. Maulana Azad also interacted with the Iranian revolutionaries and famous French Orientalist Louis Massignon in Iraq. These contacts reaffirmed Maulana Azad's belief that Muslims in India should join their fellow countrymen against the British in the Freedom Struggle. He was of the view that the Freedom Movement against the British is the combined responsibility of all communities and hence it should be carried unitedly. With these thoughts in his mind, Maulana Azad started the "Al-Hilal" Press and a weekly by the same name.

The "Al-Hilal" weekly was a landmark in the history of the press in India. Its circulation figures rose to 26,000 copies. Further, even back issues of this weekly had to be republished as every new subscriber wanted to hold all copies of "Al-Hilal". The message of patriotism and nationalism coupled with religious fervor inherent in the weekly gained wide acceptance among the masses. But these developments disturbed the British Government. In 1914, a security of two thousand rupees was imposed on "Al-Hilal" under the Press Act. When Maulana Azad deposited this amount, it was confiscated and a further security of rupees ten thousand was imposed. When these punitive measures failed to tone down the anti-establishment stance of the periodical, the government banned "Al-Hilal" and confiscated its press in 1915. Maulana Azad was not discouraged by this move.

1915, barely five months after the ban on "Al-Hilal", Maulana Azad started the publication of the "Al-Balagh" weekly. It was similar in its content to "Al-Hilal". The British realized that the provisions of the Press Act are not enough to counter the onslaught of Maulana Azad's writings. Hence the Maulana Azad was asked to leave Calcutta after the Defence of India Provisions were invoked

against him in 1916. Punjab, U.P., Delhi and Bombay also prohibited his entry under the same law. Bihar was the only state in which he could move without any hindrance. But the moment he reached Ranchi he was kept under house arrest. This detention continued till December 31, 1919. He was released on January 1, 1920.

In 1921 Maulana Azad started a weekly named "Paigham". But it was banned in December 1921 and he arrested. Maulana Azad's detention continued till January 1, 1921. In 1927, Maulana Azad restarted the publication of "Al-Hilal" and this weekly continued to be published till the end of the year.

Apart from these publications, Maulana Azad was in the forefront in all the major movements for the independence like the Khilafat Movement (1919-23), the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22) the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-32) and the Quit India Movement (1942). He was a strong advocate of undivided India and had the foresight to predict that the Urdu-speaking Muslims of India leaving for either East or West Pakistan will be marginalized by the local population. This has come true today when one looks at the plight of the "Mohajirs" in Pakistan and "Biharis" in Bangladesh.

After India became independent in 1947, Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru inducted Maulana Azad as Education Minister in his Cabinet. Under Maulana Azad's tenure, a number of measures were undertaken to promote primary and secondary education, scientific education, establishment of universities and promotion of avenues of research and higher studies.

On February 22, 1958 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad passed away. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru described Maulana Azad as "a great man - a man of luminaries, intelligence and intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to its cause. The word "luminous" is perhaps the best word I can use about his mind. When we miss and when we part with such a companion, friend, colleague, comrade, leader and teacher, there is inevitably a tremendous void created in our life and activity."

The Government of India celebrates the Birth Anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on November 11 every year as Education Day. Maulana Azad National Urdu University was

established at Hyderabad by an Act of Parliament in 1998 for the promotion of Higher Education with Urdu as the medium of instruction. These steps can be described as fitting tributes by the nation to a person who had unchallenged credentials as a freedom fighter, revolutionary journalist, social reformer, champion of communal harmony and an unparalleled Education Minister.

Azad, (Maulana) Abul Kalam (1888-1958) a striking personality among the ranks of Muslim thinkers and political activists advocating Indian nationalism based on the unity of all religio-ethnic communities. An outstanding politician of the Gandhian School and Education Minister of India, Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin (pen name Azad) was born in Mecca. His mother was an Arab and his father, Maulana Khairuddin, was a Bengal Muslim of Afghan origins. Khairuddin left India during the SEPOY REVOLT and proceeded to Mecca and settled there. He came back to Kolkata with his family in 1890.

Azad, with his Arabic mother tongue and orthodox family background, had to pursue a traditional Islamic education. But though he did not receive any modern education institutionally, through private studies and practice, he acquired proficiency in Urdu, Persian, Hindi and English. Like many other self-educated celebrities of his time, he taught himself world history and politics. He wrote many works, reinterpreting the Holy Quran, Hadith, fiqh and kalam. His erudition led him to repudiate Taqliq or the tradition of conformity and accept the principle of Tajdid or innovation. His concept of tajdid persuaded him to believe that all religions and ethnic peoples of India could make a happy federation of faiths and cultures within one independent state. This could, however, be possible only when, he believed, it would be based on democracy and secularism. In this regard, Azad was perhaps one of the earliest political thinkers of India to define and enunciate the idea of a secularist democracy for independent India.

As has been indicated already, by upbringing and education Azad was destined to be a clergyman. He mentions in his autobiography that most of his ancestors were religious divines. However, Azad had a political bent of mind. At a very early age he showed interest in politics. He developed interest in the pan-

Islamic doctrines of Jamaluddin Afghani and the Aligarh thought of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Imbued with the pan-Islamic spirit, he visited Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey. But he returned to Calcutta with an altogether new perception of life and politics. In Iraq he met the exiled revolutionaries who were fighting to establish a constitutional government in Iran. In Egypt he met Shaikh Muhammad Abduh and Saeed Pasha and other revolutionary activists of the Arab world. He had a first hand knowledge of the ideals and spirit of the Young Turks in Constantinople. All these contacts turned him into a nationalist revolutionary. He adopted the pen name 'Azad' as a mark of his mental emancipation from a narrow view of religion and life.

On his return from abroad, Azad met two leading revolutionaries of eastern India, Sri Arabinda Ghose and Sri Shyam Shundar Chakravarty, and joined the revolutionary movement against British rule. He became a secret revolutionary on the one hand and an open Indian nationalist activist on the other. He believed that Indian nationalism had to be based on the basis of Hindu-Muslim unity and must be rooted in secular concepts of politics and statehood. From the Congress platform he supported the Khilafatist movement not to restore the old regime in Turkey but to strengthen the hands of the New Turks who, according to him, represented the true spirit of the original Khilafat institution.

Azad's Al-Helal, an Urdu weekly newspaper established in 1912, openly attacked British imperialism and its misdeeds in India. It became a powerful Congress and revolutionary mouthpiece ventilating extremist views. Al-Helal played an important role in forging Hindu-Muslim unity after the bad blood created between the two communities on the issue of communal representation.

Al-Helal was looked at by the government as a propagator of dangerous views and hence was banned in 1914. Azad then changed its name and published another weekly called Al-Balagh with the same mission of propagating Indian nationalism and revolutionary ideas based on Hindu-Muslim unity. In 1916, the government banned this paper too and expelled Azad from Calcutta and interned him at Ranchi from where he was released after the First World War in 1920.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, now a member of the central leadership of the All India National Congress as well as Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and CHITTA RANJAN DAS, was recognised by Gandhi as one of his most trusted lieutenants. He was elected the president of the special session of the Congress in Delhi (1923) and the one in Ramgarh (1940). During the stormy politics of India in the 1930s and '40s, Azad emerged as one of Gandhi's most intimate advisor. In all negotiations from the CRIPPS MISSION (1942) to the CABINET MISSION (1946), Azad was very closely consulted by Gandhi, particularly on questions of constitutionality and communality. Azad was one of the negotiating members during both the Cripps Mission (1942) and the Cabinet Mission (1946). But it seems that with the strengthening of the Pakistan movement and worsening Hindu-Muslim relations, Azad's influence waned. He recorded his frustration in his letters and autobiography to the effect that the partition of India could have been avoided had the Congress High Command respected his idea about the accommodation of the viewpoints of Jinnah and the Muslim League. The Congress High Command was catastrophically wrong, he asserted, when it partially rejected the Cabinet Mission formula, which had been previously accepted by the Muslim League High Command. Azad was emphatically opposed to Nehru's view which, according to him, led to the collapse of the Cabinet Mission Plan and eventually to the partition of India on a communal basis. But the political difference lately developed between the two leaders did not weaken their personal friendship which is manifested by his dedication of his famous autobiography India Wins Freedom to Nehru stating 'For Jawaharlal Nehru: Friend and Comrade'.

INDIA WINS FREEDOM

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Maulana Azad's statement on Muslim issues in India

April 15, 1946

... on 15 April 1946, I issued a statement dealing with the demands of Muslims and other minorities. Now that the division of India is a fact and ten years have passed, I again look at the statement and find that everything I had then said has come

to happen. As this statement contains my considered views on the solution of the Indian problem, I feel I should quote it in full. This is what I then said, and would still say:

I have considered from every possible point of view the scheme of Pakistan as formulated by the Muslim League. As an Indian I have examined its implications for the future of India as a whole. As a Muslim I have examined its likely effects upon the fortunes of Muslims of India.

Considering the scheme in all its aspects I have come to the conclusion that it is harmful not only for India as a whole but for Muslims in particular. And in fact it creates more problems than it solves.

I must confess that the very term Pakistan goes against my grain. It suggests that some portions of the world are pure while others are impure. Such a division of territories into pure and impure is un-Islamic and is more in keeping with orthodox Brahmanism which divides men and countries into holy and unholy - a division which is a repudiation of the very spirit of Islam. Islam recognises no such division and the prophet says, 'God has made the whole world a mosque for me.'

Further, it seems that the scheme of Pakistan is a symbol of defeatism and has been built up on the analogy of the Jewish demand for a national home. It is a confession that Indian Muslims cannot hold their own in India as a whole and would be content to withdraw to a corner specially reserved for them.

One can sympathise with the aspiration of the Jews for such a national home, as they are scattered all over the world and cannot in any region have any effective voice in the administration. The conditions of Indian Muslims is quite otherwise. Over 90 million in number, they are in quantity and quality a sufficiently important element in Indian life to Influence decisively all questions of administration and policy. Nature has further helped them by concentrating them in certain areas.

In such a context, the demand for Pakistan loses all force. As a Muslim, I for one am not prepared for a moment to give up my right to treat the whole of India as my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life. To me it seems

a sure sign of cowardice to give up what is my patrimony and content myself with a mere fragment of it.

As is well known, Mr Jinnah's Pakistan scheme is based on his two nation theory. His thesis is that India contains many nationalities based on religious differences. Of them the two major nations, the Hindus and Muslims, must as separate nations have separate states. When Dr Edward Thompson once pointed out to Mr Jinnah that Hindus and Muslims live side by side in thousands of Indian towns, villages and hamlets, Mr Jinnah replied that this in no way affected their separate nationality. Two nations according to Mr Jinnah confront one another in every hamlet, village and town, and he, therefore, desires that they should be separated into two states.

I am prepared to overlook all other aspects of the problem and judge it from the point of view of Muslim interests alone. I shall go still further and say that if it can be shown that the scheme of Pakistan can in any way benefit Muslims I would be prepared to accept it myself and also to work for its acceptance by others. But the truth is that even If I examine the scheme from the point of view of the communal interests of the Muslims themselves, I am forced to the conclusion that it can in no way benefit them or allay their legitimate fears.

Let us consider dispassionately the consequences which will follow if we give effect to the Pakistan scheme. India will be divided into two States, one with a majority of Muslims and the other of Hindus. In the Hindustan State there will remain three and a half crores of Muslims scattered in small minorities all over the land. With 17 per cent in U.P, 12 per cent in Bihar and 9 per cent in Madras, they will be weaker than they are today in the Hindu majority provinces. They have had their homelands in these regions for almost a thousand years and built up well known centres of Muslim culture and civilisation there.

They will awaken overnight and discover that they have become alien and foreigners. Backward industrially, educationally and economically, they will be left to the mercies to what would become an unadulterated Hindu raj.

On the other hand, their position within the Pakistan State will be vulnerable and weak. Nowhere in Pakistan will their majority be comparable to the Hindu majority in the Hindustan States.

In fact, their majority will be so slight that it will be offset by the economical, educational and political lead enjoyed by non-Muslims in these areas. Even if this were not so and Pakistan were overwhelmingly Muslim in population, it still could hardly solve the problem of Muslims in Hindustan.

Two states confronting one another, offer no solution of the problem of one another's minorities, but only lead to retribution and reprisals by introducing a system of mutual hostages. The scheme of Pakistan therefore solves no problem for the Muslims. It cannot safeguard their rights where they are in a minority nor as citizens of Pakistan secure them a position in Indian or world affairs which they would enjoy as citizens of a major State like the Indian Union.

It may be argued that if Pakistan is so much against the interests of the Muslims themselves, why should such a large section of Muslims be swept away by its lure? The answer is to be found in the attitude of certain communal extremists among the Hindus. When the Muslim League began to speak of Pakistan, they read into the scheme a sinister pan-Islamic conspiracy and began to oppose it out of fear that it foreshadowed a combination of Indian Muslim with trans-Indian Muslims States.

The opposition acted as an incentive to the adherents of the League. With simple though untenable logic they argued that if Hindus were so opposed to Pakistan, surely it must be of benefit to Muslims. An atmosphere of emotional frenzy was created which made reasonable appraisement impossible and swept away, especially the younger and more impressionable among the Muslims. I have, however, no doubt that when the present frenzy has died down and the question can be considered dispassionately, those who now support Pakistan will themselves repudiate it as harmful for Muslim Interests.

The formula which I have succeeded in making the Congress accept secures whatever merit the Pakistan scheme contains while all its defects and drawbacks are avoided. The basis of Pakistan is the fear of interference by the Centre in Muslim

majority areas as the Hindus will be in a majority in the Centre. The Congress meets this fear by granting full autonomy to the provincial units and vesting all residuary power in the provinces. It also has provided for two lists of Central subjects, one compulsory and one optional, so that if any provincial unit so wants, it can administer all subjects itself except a minimum delegated to the Centre. The Congress scheme therefore ensures that Muslim majority provinces are internally free to develop as they will, but can at the same time influence the Centre on all issues which affect India as a whole.

The situation in India is such that all attempts to establish a centralised and unitary government are bound to fail. Equally doomed to failure is the attempt to divide India into two States. After considering all aspects of the question, I have come to the conclusion that the only solution can be on the lines embodied in the Congress formula which allows room for development both to the provinces and to India as a whole. The Congress formula meets the fear of the Muslim majority areas to allay which the scheme of Pakistan was formed. On the other hand, it avoids the defects of the Pakistan scheme which would bring the Muslims where they are in a minority under a purely Hindu government.

I am one of those who considers the present chapter of communal bitterness and differences as a transient phase in Indian life. I firmly hold that they will disappear when India assumes the responsibility of her own destiny. I am reminded of a saying of Mr Gladstone that the best cure for a man's fear of the water was to throw him into it. Similarly India must assume responsibilities and administer her own affairs before fears and suspicions can be fully allayed.

When India attains her destiny, she will forget the chapter of communal suspicion and conflict and face the problems of modern life from a modern point of view. Differences will no doubt persist, but they will be economic, not communal. Opposition among political parties will continue, but it will be based, not on religion but on economic and political issues. Class and not community will be the basis of future alignments, and policies will be shaped accordingly.

If It be argued that this is only a faith which events may not justify would say that in any case the nine crores of Muslims constitute a factor which nobody can ignore and whatever the circumstances they are strong enough to safeguard their own destiny.

Though he remains an icon of secular nationalism in modern-day India, Azad was actually born in Mecca in 1888 and lived there till he was about seven. His father Khairuddin, a scholar-sufi originally from Calcutta, was persuaded by his Calcuttan disciples to return back to that city. Under the strict tutelage of his father, Azad continued his Islamic studies, though the young prodigy resented the restrictive and authoritarian manner in which this syllabus was taught; therefore, on his own, Azad secretly cultivated a taste for Urdu books and Persian poetry and even learnt to play the sitar. Around this time he also experienced a revulsion against the pir-worship of his father's disciples and a diminished desire to succeed his father as pir.

By the time he was thirteen, Azad had become totally disillusioned with his Islamic training and found solace in the modernist writings of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. However, the rationalism of Sir Syed only ended up reinforcing the boy's earlier doubts about religion and Azad fell into a period of atheism which, according to him, lasted from the age of 14 to 22. During his later teenage years he seems to have come into close contact with the Hindu revolutionaries of Bengal. A combination of brief travel to the Middle East and his Arabic reading also exposed him more deeply to the reformist ideas of Sheikh Abduh of Egypt and the uncompromising nationalism and anti-imperialism of Mustafa Kamil.

After this period of spiritual homelessness, Azad, by the end of 1909, had an emotional/mystical experience that renewed his faith in religion and galvanised his personality in a dramatic way. Following this 'conversion,' Azad's career really began to take-off in 1912 with the appearance of his Urdu journal Al-Hilal. Using breathtaking language, the journal simultaneously preached 'pure' Islam and Indian independence. Through his particular interpretation of Islam, Azad sought to bring Indian Muslims onto the platform of the freedom movement and to work in cooperation

with Hindus who were already there. Despite his earlier admiration for Sir Syed, Azad was a harsh critic of the loyalist politics of Aligarh University.

Contrary to what is stated in certain types of historiography in India and Pakistan, Hindu-Muslim cooperation was not something that the Maulana adopted out of expediency or after his eventual meeting with Gandhi. Though the journal was ambiguous about specific methods of cooperation and post-Independence political arrangements, Hindu-Muslim unity was a sentiment he had been partial to from very early on in his life. This is evident in his poignant 1910 essay on the broad-minded Sufi saint Sarmad. However, there was a revivalist tone to Al-Hilal which critics would later say inadvertently reinforced communal consciousness among certain Muslims, even though the rhetorical devices had been used to arouse Muslims out of political lethargy.

When World War I broke out in Europe, the British government, viewing the journal as seditious, expelled Azad from Bengal and placed him under internment in Ranchi for three and a half years. A few weeks after his release, he met Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi for the first time; he accepted Gandhi's program of non-cooperation and became the first prominent Muslim in India to declare himself an ally of the Mahatma. The massacres at Jallianwala Bagh had set all Indians afire, but Indian Muslims too in 1920 were greatly perturbed by the British government's handling of the Turkish empire and the Khilafat during the War. In consultation with Azad, Gandhi persuaded the Congress to make the demand for the protection of the Khilafat a part of the national demand for freedom. The overlapping relationship between the Congress and the Khilafat Conference ended up bringing Muslims in large numbers to the freedom movement.

By 1921 Hindu-Muslim unity in the country seemed to be at an all-time high, and Azad was soon arrested. Yet this solidarity, while impressively achieved, proved to be a short-lived; upon his release in 1923, the country was passing through a particularly strong wave of communal rioting. In addition to other important factors, Muslims were shocked out of their reverie because of the Turkish government's move to abolish the Khilafat. The ambiguous

results of the Khilafat Movement has provoked criticism from some latter-day historians over Azad's attempts at 'fusing' religion with politics. By unsystematically using Quranic arguments to support the Khilafat Movement and Hindu-Muslim cooperation, it has been suggested that Azad inadvertently cultivated identity politics among Muslims and allowed some of his ideas to be misconstrued by more communal interests.

Azad came to realize that in politics he could only be guided by the general principles of his religion and his knowledge of Indian Muslim history, rather than through invoking specific textual injunctions. By this time, he was also increasingly becoming an active member on the Congress stage, and his mediating skills largely prevented a split in the party between constitutionalists like Motilal Nehru and non-cooperatists like Vallabhai Patel. Though he continued his efforts to bring various Muslim organizations in line with Congress and involved in the freedom movement, in 1928 serious differences arose between the Congress and organizations like the Muslim League and the Khilafat Conference over the Nehru report. Azad was forced to break ties with the latter two organizations.

In 1930, the Congress declared complete independence as the goal of the national movement, and civil disobedience continued in vigour following Gandhi's famous Salt March. Azad was imprisoned twice in a row during this period, and then released in 1936 along with the other Congress leaders. It was during these periods of imprisonment that the Maulana was able to complete the first edition of his famous Tarjuman al-Quran, his Urdu translation and commentary on the Quran. A second expanded edition was published during the 1940s.

This incomplete translation and commentary would end up being his most definitive, though controversial, theological statement on how Indian Muslims could live out their religion in a religiously pluralist and politically secular environment. Hence, he articulated an Islam that was hospitable towards other forms of monotheism, especially Hinduism, and which placed emphasis on commonly held rules of righteous conduct. Though it was a landmark effort to inject a liberal ethos into Islam, the Tarjuman, unfortunately, did not have the overwhelming impact he hoped

it would. The controversies that sprung up around this work, particularly from members of the ulema that were supporting him politically, dried up any inspiration in him to carry out the larger task of comprehensive religious reform and reinterpretation.

Following the passing away of M.A. Ansari in 1936, Azad became the most prominent Muslim in the Congress. By 1939 he was elected President of the party, though he was not the first Muslim to occupy that position. During the thirties the Muslim League had been gaining steam under Jinnah, and given special impetus because of grievances against certain Congress elected provincial governments. Azad's presidential address at the Ramgarh session of the Congress in 1940 occurred just a few days before Jinnah's historic Pakistan Resolution, and, in addition to articulating the point of view of the nationalist Muslims, became a classic statement on Indian secularism and a refutation of the two-nations theory.

Unfortunately, in addition to being caught in the cross-fire between Hindu and Muslim communalists, Azad by then had become subject to a trenchant campaign of criticism by influential Muslim political opponents. Many members of the religious and modern educated classes who earlier in his career had respected him and his religious ideas eventually turned against him because of this vilifying propaganda. Though he was capable of stirring large crowds with his brilliant oratory when called upon to do so, Azad's pride and good manners kept him from publicly countering his detractors, and his intellectual and aristocratic nature kept him from reaching out directly to the Muslim masses when such an intervention was needed.

Azad was imprisoned for a fifth time in 1940, following a limited campaign of civil disobedience, and released a year later. By 1942, and following the more comprehensive Quit India Movement, he, along with the other Congress leaders, was imprisoned again. Upon his release in 1946, Azad remained Congress President throughout the War years. During his presidency, he tried to encourage Congress to come to terms with certain Muslim fears and to make some concessions with the League to avoid splitting the country; but both Jinnah's single-mindedness and certain Congress mistakes prevented any

settlement from occurring. The Maulana reluctantly relinquished the Congress presidency in 1946, hoping that this would open an avenue between the Congress and the League; the latter party had refused to acknowledge a Muslim presence within the former one. He kept out of the coalition government formed that year, but in 1947, at Gandhi's urging, he became Minister of Education. Azad had been totally opposed to Mountbatten's plan for dividing the country, but by March of that year, Partition had become an inevitability; the polarization within the interim government, formed between the Congress and the League, and the rising communal violence throughout India had become too much. Though, like Gandhi, he was forced to accept Partition, he could never reconcile himself to it and was totally heartbroken by the event and its bloody aftermath.

Following Independence, he would hold the post of Minister of Education for ten years. Though he was not a particularly effective administrator, he did perform some important services such as cultivating technical, adult, and women's education, and an academy of literature, as well as opposing the ejection of English as a national language. As in earlier years, he could not project the mystical piety of, say, a Baba Farid needed to draw the Muslim and Hindu masses to him; but his belief in religious pluralism and the need for a humanistic outlook broadened even further, and he openly identified parallels between Vedantic and Sufi thought in some of his addresses. His last years were marked by sadness and loneliness, a consequence of a life lived so individualistically. Abul Kalam Azad died in 1958 of a stroke and was buried in a dignified corner in Old Delhi near the Jama Masjid. It is a great irony that, while possessing a thorough Islamic training, Azad ended up espousing a secular nationalism informed by personal religious sensibilities, while his opponent Jinnah, a modernist with a minimal religious upbringing, ended up vying for a separate Muslim state informed by purely political considerations

The maker of phrases survives the maker of things in history. "There is nothing so swiftly forgotten," says Gore Vidal, "as the public's memory of a good action. This is why great men insist on putting up monuments to themselves with their deeds carefully

recorded since those they served will not honour them in life or in death. Heroes must see to their own fame. No one else will."

A British historian of south Asia noticed how differently those who supported the movement for Pakistan have come to be remembered as compared with those who devoted themselves to Indian nationalism. Mohammad Iqbal's tomb of sandstone, lapis lazuli and white marble is a place of pilgrimage. Mohammed Ali Jinnah's mazar is a symbol of Pakistan's identity and one of the first places to which the visitor to Karachi is taken.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's mausoleum before the Jama Masjid in Delhi, on the other hand, is not greatly frequented. The relative neglect of his tomb suggests that many Indian Muslims may have lost interest in keeping his memory alive. It also suggests that Indian society as a whole may no longer value, as before, and perhaps may not even know the principles for which he stood.

It is not at all surprising why history books in Pakistan make no mention of Azad, except to echo the Quaid-i-Azam's view that he was a Muslim "show-boy" Congress president. What is surprising is how a man of Azad's stature has been submerged beneath the rationalisation of the victors -- the founders of Pakistan -- in our own country. This is the man whom Jawaharlal Nehru called "a very brave and gallant gentleman, a finished product of the culture that, in these days, pertains to few".

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Congress aspiration to be a nationalist party. His status was thus the focal point of Gandhi's clash with Jinnah, who maintained that politically no one but a Muslim Leaguer could represent Muslim interests.

Sardar Patel, the hero of the Bardoli satyagraha and the home minister who carried the princely states to the burning ghat of oblivion, spoke and acted from the lofty heights of majoritarianism. Azad, caught up in the crossfire of Hindu and Muslim communalists, did not occupy the same vantage point. He had to play his innings on a sticky turf in rough weather. On occasions, his own party colleagues thwarted his initiatives and turned him into just a titular Congress head during, for example, the vital negotiations with both the Cripps and the Cabinet missions.

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Essentially a thinker and the chief exponent of Wahdat-i-deen or the essential oneness of all religions, Azad played around with a variety of ideas on religion, state and civil society. Thoughtful and reflective, he had a mind like a razor, which cut through a fog of ideas (Nehru). Lesser men during his days found conflict in the rich variety of Indian life. But he was big enough not only to see the essential unity behind all that diversity but also to realise that only in unity was there hope for India as a whole. He was a man on the move, his eyes set on India's future which was to be fashioned on the basis of existing cross-community networks. His unfinished Tarjuman-al-Quran was easily the most profound statement on multiculturalism and inter-faith understanding. His political testament, delivered at the Congress session in 1940, was

a neat and powerful summation of the ideology of secular nationalism:

"I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure is incomplete. I am an essential element, which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim."

To a region that has experienced the trauma of Partition the life of Azad shows how during the freedom struggle there were Muslims who worked for the highest secular ideals. To a region beset by religious intolerance the life of Azad reveals how the finest religious sensibility can fashion the most open and humane outlook in private and public life.

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD AND THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was once drawn by a correspondent of the daily Zamindar [16 June, 1936] of Lahore into the controversy as to the nature of the claims of the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement and the rights of the Ahmadiyya communities to claim a position within Islam. Both these matters were set at rest by the Maulana in the very first passage of his first letter to the said correspondent thus:

"You enquire which one of the two Ahmadi groups follows the true path, the Qadian group or the Lahore one. In my opinion neither is on the true and right path, but the Qadian section has gone too far in its ghuluww, so far that the very fundamentals of Islam have been shaken; for instance, its belief that for faith and salvation the known and admitted doctrines of Islam are not now sufficient and that it is essential to believe in the Mirza Sahib of Qadian. But the Lahore group denies this ghuluww; it neither confesses a faith in the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib nor does it add any new condition to the conditions of faith; where it has stumbled is in the misplaced belief which it has created for the Mirza Sahib."

In this passage Maulana Abul Kalam has made clear the three points: 1. The position which the Mirza Sahib claimed for himself, 2. Whether the Qadian group is outside or within the pale of Islam, and 3. The position of the Lahore group. Let us consider first the position of the Mirza Sahib in the light of what the Maulana has said. In ascribing ghuluww to the Qadianis, the Maulana has in fact made it clear that the Mirza Sahib never claimed prophethood for himself, for a ghali is one who ascribes a position to its leader higher than that which he claims for himself. For example, the Christians are guilty of ghuluww when they ascribe to Jesus Christ a claim to Godhead because he never claimed Godhead for himself. Hence the Qadianis can be said to be guilty of ghuluww only if they ascribe to Mirza Sahib a claim which he never made for himself.

The above conclusion drawn from Maulana Abul Kalam's letter is further corroborated by two of his earlier writings on the subject. The first of these is a passage which occurs in the Maulana's well-known book the Tadhkirah published in 1919. Writing about Sayyid Muhammad of Jaunpur who claimed to be the Mahdi, the Maulana says: "The affair of the Sayyid of whom we are speaking is full of wonder, and various sorts of claims and absurd sayings have been attributed to him. What the followers of a person say need not be paid attention to, for whomever a people take for their religious leader they would raise him to no less a dignity than that of God-bead, and if they are very careful they would not keep him below the position of a prophet. But some recent writers have written things which at first sight cause perturbance. Shah Abdul Haq, the Muhaddath of Delhi, writes:

'According to Sayyid Muhammad of Jaunpur, every perfection possessed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad was also possessed by Sayyid Muhammad, the only difference being that there it was in asalat (possessed originally) and here it was by tab'iyyat (attained by following), and by following the Holy Prophet he attained to such a place that he became like a prophet.'

"Reading these words of Shah Sahib, it occurred to me that in our own days a big section of the followers of the Mirza Sahib of Qadian entertains an exactly similar belief about the Mirza Sahib and lays the foundation of all its ghuluww (exceeding the bounds) and ighraq (exaggeration) on this difference of asalat (possessing originally) and tabe'ijyat (attaining by following)" (pp. 30, 31).

Here the Maulana states that the followers of Sayyid Muhammad and a great section of the followers of the Mirza Sahib have fallen into the same error and have been guilty of exaggerating the claims of their respective leaders. Evidently he is referring here to the Qadianis and considers them to be guilty of ghuluww, i.e., exaggerating the claims of the Mirza Sahib and attributing to him what he never claimed. Thus attributing the claim of prophethood to Mirza Sahib is ghuluww on the part of the Qadianis; in other words, the Mirza Sahib did not claim to prophethood.

As regards the second writing of the Maulana which exonerates the Mirza Sahib of laying claim to prophethood, it is really a fatwa given by him when extracts dealing with the alleged claim to prophethood taken from his different writings were placed before the Maulana. These extracts were sent to him by me personally, and he returned those papers with the following words: "He is a mu'awwil (one who explains a word as conveying a significance quite different from its ordinary significance) and a mu'awwil is by unanimous decision not a kafir." [I am writing this from memory and the originals in my papers at Lahore. But there is not the least doubt in my mind as to the words quoted being in their essence those of the Maulana.]

This shows that after reading all the writings of the Mirza Sahib on the question of his alleged claim to prophethood, Maulana Abul Kalam came to the conclusion that he never laid claim to prophethood and explained his use of the word prophet as conveying a different significance from the usually received one.

Thus Maulana's letters to the correspondent of the Zamindar settle at least one question, viz. that the Mirza Sahib was not a claimant to prophethood and that he was a Muslim and not a kafir.

We will now take the second question whether the Maulana looks upon the Qadianis as Muslims or kafirs. The Maulana considers them to be guilty of ghuluww (exaggeration and exceeding the proper limits), but at the same time he considers them to be Muslims -- Muslims who have strayed away from the right path. That is all that one Muslim can say about another. Their error is very great, and it shakes the very foundations of

Islam, says the Maulana, but he has not been carried away by the senseless agitation to expel this or that group from the pale of Islam. It is the Holy Prophet's verdict that they are Muslims -- yes erring Muslims -- but Muslims all the same. For, does not the Holy Prophet say: "Whoever says prayers as we do, and faces our Qibla and eats our dhabiha, that one is surely a Muslim and for him is the covenant of Allah and the covenant of the Apostle of Allah, so do not violate the covenant of Allah" (Bukhari, 8: 28).

And on a certain occasion when a man abused the Holy Prophet in his face, and the Holy Prophet would not suffer any harm be done to him because, he said, "perhaps he said prayers," Khalid remarked: "How many people there are who say prayers, yet there is on their lips what is not in their hearts." But the Holy Prophet rebuked him, saying: "I am not commanded to pierce the hearts of the people or to break open their secret thoughts" (Bukhari, 65: 63).

The Maulana is thus a noble exception to the 'ulama of the present day who care neither for the Holy Qur'an which says: "And say not to any one who offers you the (Islamic) salutation: Thou art not a believer" (4: 94); nor yet for the Holy Prophet who clearly commanded that the covenant of God shall not be broken by calling a man kafir who said prayers as the Muslims do. The Qadianis are undoubtedly shaking the very foundations of Islam by attributing prophethood to the Mujaddid of this century and by denouncing four hundred million Muslims as kafirs because they do not believe in the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib, but with all those grievous errors they are Muslims, just as the Shias are Muslims though they abuse the companions of the Holy Prophet and denounce them as usurpers and just as so many other extremist sects are Muslims though they raise their leaders to the dignity of Godhead or the dignity of prophethood.

I now come to the third question: the Lahore section of the followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, or the Ahmadis as they are now generally called as distinguished from the Qadianis. Maulana Abul Kalam has, here too, set at rest one question, viz., that the Ahmadis do not believe in the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib, nor do they add any condition to the accepted conditions of the faith of Islam. This clearing of the position of

the Ahmadis in Islam is also an important contribution to sane criticism in the Muslim camp, for sanity is a gift which is so rare among the ulama, even among the general Muslim public, when they have to deal with Ahmadis, Once, Mufti Kifayatullah, the head of the Jami'at-ul-Ulama of Delhi, committed the mad act of denouncing the Lahore Ahmadis as kafirs because, he said, "they believed in the prophethood of Mirza Sahib," and this in spite of the fact that we have been carrying on an incessant war against the Qadianis regarding their belief in the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib and their denunciation of the forty crores [400,000,000]of Muslims as kafirs.

While I am sincerely thankful to Maulana Abul Kalam for definitely and clearly upholding the truth in these three matters, that the Mirza Sahib never claimed to be a prophet, that the Qadianis in spite of their grievous errors are Muslims, and that the Ahmadis deny the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib and accept him only as a Mujaddid, adding nothing to the accepted doctrines of the faith of Islam, I must say that the Maulana has not done justice to us. He has every right to say that we are not on the true path, for to differ with others is the Muslim's birthright; the Maulana has a right to differ with us and we have a right to differ with the Maulana. But when he says that we have "stumbled" in a "misplaced belief which we have created for the Mirza Sahib," he is unjust to us. We have created no belief for the Mirza Sahib except only what the Qur'an and the Hadith say. For what is our belief regarding Mirza Sahib? We accept him as a Mujaddid and we accept him as fulfilling the prophecies relating to the advent of the Messiah among the Muslims. And the coming of Mujaddids and the advent of a Messiah are both based on Hadith.

As regards the first point, the Maulana was undoubtedly misunderstood as denying the coming of Mujaddids when his two letters to the correspondent of the Zamindar appeared in the press. But the writer of Tadhkirah who describes the Mujaddid is the centre of all hope in the triumph of Islam could not deny the coming of Mujaddids. His words were surely strong, but he has tried to explain them away in a later statement, and whether we accept or reject his explanation, we have no tight to ascribe to him denial of the coming of Mujaddids now that be has

reaffirmed his faith in their advent in very clear words. His real views on this point are met with in his famous writing, the Tadhkirah:

"These perfect ones are given the name of muhaddath in the hadith of Bukhari, and in them, too, is fulfilled the hadith relating to the appearance of Mujaddid, which has been narrated through various channels, and about its genuineness, therefore no doubt can be entertained" (p. 94).

"And these are the clear and manifest characteristics of the place of tajdid (the position of the Mujaddid), the vicegerency of prophethood, about which I have again and again said that the highest of heads must bow there" (p. 140).

Now when it is accepted that Mujaddids must come, and the Hadith says that the commencement of every century of Hijrah shall see the appearance of a Mujaddid, I fail to see how our belief about the Mirza Sahib being a Mujaddid of the fourteenth century is "misplaced" when there is no one to claim that office, nor has any one else been unanimously accepted as the Mujaddid. In accepting Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Mujaddid of the fourteenth century we have bowed only before the Hadith of the Holy Prophet.

One of the two positions must be accepted; cither the hadith relating to the appearance of the Mujaddid is not genuine, which view is however strongly rejected by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, or Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is the Mujaddid of the 14th century, for there is neither another claimant nor has the Muslim world unanimously declared another man to be the Mujaddid of this century.

Now there remains only one point. Have we created any new belief in accepting the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement as the Messiah that was to come among the Muslims? Happily Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, whose letters in the Zamindar raised apprehensions in some minds that he was denying the hadith referring to the advent of Messiah, has cleared his position in a later statement, and we are glad that he accepts the hadith, I am further certain that, like us, the Maulana also believes in the death of Jesus Christ. Now the position is this: The Messiah must come as the Hadith says, but Jesus Christ cannot be that Messiah because

he died long ago. There is then no escaping the conclusion that the Messiah that is to come among the Muslims must be a Mujaddid of this ummah. We accept Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be that Mujaddid. We have created no new belief. Here again we bow our head before the Hadith of the Holy Prophet. What are our arguments for accepting him as such is a different question which cannot be discussed here. The Maulana has a right to say that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is not the Mujaddid and the Messiah, and that we have made a mistake in fixing our choice, just as we have the right to say that the Maulana is making a mistake in rejecting him, but two conclusions are inevitable: There must be a Mujaddid of this century, and only a Mujaddid can be the Promised Messiah.

It is not at all surprising why history books in Pakistan make no mention of Azad, except to echo the Quaid-i-Azam's view that he was a Muslim "showboy" Congress president. What is surprising is how a man of Azad's stature has been submerged beneath the rationalization of the victors - the founders of Pakistan - in our own country. This is the man whom Jawaharlal Nehru called "a very brave and gallant gentleman, a finished product of the culture that, in these days, pertains to few".

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Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin, better known as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was a renowned scholar, poet, freedom fighter and leader of the Indian National Congress in India's struggle for Independence. He was well versed in many languages viz. Arabic, English, Urdu, Hindi, Persian and Bengali, and a prolific debater - as depicted by his name, Abul Kalam, which literally means father or lord of dialogue. His forefathers came from Herat, Afghanistan in Babur's days. His mother was an Arab and the daughter of Sheikh Mohammad Zaher Watri and his father, Maulana Khairuddin, was a Bengali Muslim of Afghan (probably Tajik) origins. Khairuddin left India during the Sepoy Mutiny, proceeded to Mecca and settled there. He came back to Calcutta with his family in 1890. Azad was a descendant of a lineage maulanas. He was given the chrono-grammatical name of Firoz Bakht (of exalted destiny), but was commonly called Muhiyuddin Ahmad. Educated according to the traditional curriculum, Azad learned Arabic and Persian first, and then philosophy, geometry, mathematics and algebra. He was taught at home, first by his father, later by appointed teachers who were eminent in their respective fields. Seeing that English was fast becoming the international language, Azad taught himself to read, write and speak the language. He was an Ahle-Hadees, and followed the way of Salafi Manhaj. He adopted the pen name Azad to signify his freedom from traditional Muslim ways. Azad was introduced to the freedom struggle by revolutionary Shri Shyam Sunder Chakravarthy. Most revolutionaries in Bengal were Hindus. Azad greatly surprised his fellow Hindu revolutionaries with his willingness to join the freedom struggle. At first his peers were skeptical of his intentions.

Azad found the revolutionary activities restricted to Bengal and Bihar. Within two years, Azad helped setup secret revolutionary centers all over north India and Bombay.

Most revolutionaries were anti-Muslim because they felt that the British Government was using the Muslim community against India's freedom struggle. Azad tried to convince his colleagues that indifference and hostility toward the Muslims would only make the path to freedom more difficult.

Azad began publication of a journal called Al Hilal (the Crescent) in June 1912 to increase revolutionary recruits amongst the Muslims. The Al Hilal reached a circulation of 26,000 in two years. The British Government used the Press Act and then the Defense of India Regulations Act in 1916 to shut the journal down.

Azad roused the Muslim community through the Khilafat Movement. The aim of the movement was to re-instate the Khalifa as the head of British captured Turkey.

Azad supported Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement and joined the Indian National Congress (I.N.C) in January 1920. He presided over the special session of Congress in September 1923 and is said to be at the age of 35, the youngest man elected as the President of the Congress.

Azad was arrested in 1930 for violation of the salt laws as part of Gandhhiji's Salt Satyagraha. He was put in Meerut jail for a year and a half.

Azad was the staunchest opponent of partition of India into India and Pakistan. He supported a confederation of autonomous provinces with their own constitutions but common defense and economy, an arrangement suggested in the British Cabinet Mission Plan of May 1946. According to Azad partition was against the grain of the Indian culture which did not believe in "divorce before marriage." Partition shattered his dream of an unified nation where the Hindu and Muslim faiths would learn to co-exist in harmony.

Maulana Azad served as the Minister of Education in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet from 1947 to 1958. He died in August 1958. Azad was honored with the Bharat Ratna posthumously in 1992. Azad is featured on an Indian postage stamp; there are

many schools, colleges, roads and hospitals all over India named after him, the most famous of which is the Maulana Azad Medical College (situated in Old Delhi, on the site of an erstwhile British jail, and flanked by the Khooni Darwaza, a commemorative arch of the last of the Mughal heirs - murdered by a British officer in 1857). It is consistently rated among the top ten medical colleges in India.

HIS WRITINGS

As a scholar, Maulana Azad produced monumental literary works. Azad penned the book India Wins Freedom in 1957. He had also authored the Ghubar-i-Khatir, written in jail between 1942-1945, and with the Tadhkirah, a masterpiece of the Urdu language.

His commentary on the Qur'an is unique in the realm of Muslim liberation.

Whatever role he was called upon to play whether in the field of literature or politics, he lent to it a dignity and poise which was entirely his own. He is also remembered as a poet and writer of great skill.

Started a weekly journal Al Hilal to increase the revolutionary recruits amongst the Muslims; elected as Congress President in 1923 and 1940; became independent India's first education minister.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's real name was Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin. He was popularly known as Maulana Azad. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was one of the foremost leaders of Indian freedom struggle. He was also a renowned scholar, and poet. Maulana Azad was well versed in many languages viz. Arabic, English, Urdu, Hindi, Persian and Bengali.

Maulana Azad was a brilliant debater, as indicated by his name, Abul Kalam, which literally means "lord of dialogue". He adopted the pen name 'Azad' as a mark of his mental emancipation from a narrow view of religion and life. Maulana Azad became independent India's first education minister. For his invaluable contribution to the nation, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour, Bharat Ratna in 1992.

7

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad - Movement for India's Freedom

His political activities continued unabated and he was interned in Ranchi in 1916. Soon after his release in January, 1920 he came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi. In the very first meeting with Gandhiji a bond of lasting friendship was forged between the two individuals. Maulana Azad like Mahatma Gandhi believed that good could only breed good and that evil would always spell evil. Like Bal Gangadhar Tilak earlier and Mahatma Gandhi who was his contemporary, Azad was a firm believer in the inseparability of politics from religion. All these three leaders used religion to galvanize the socially and economically backward Indian masses for struggle against foreign colonial rule.

He supported Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement (breaking with the leaders of the Khilafat) and joined the Indian National Congress (I.N.C) in January 1920. Azad never associated himself with the Muslim League, the separatist Muslim political party. Along with men like Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Abbas Tyabji, he was a fervent Indian nationalist and follower of Mahatma Gandhi. They stuck by Gandhi even after the suspension of civil resistance due to the Chauri Chaura killings of 22 policemen by a nationalist mob.

In 1923 he was elected President of the Indian National Congress at the young age of 35. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, soon became a member of the central leadership of the All India National Congress along with Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Chitta Ranjan Das, and was recognised by Gandhi as one of his most

trusted lieutenants. He was elected the president of the special session of the Congress in Delhi (1923) and the one in Ramgarh (1940).

Azad was arrested during the Non-Cooperation Movement, and also in 1930 for violation of the salt laws as part of Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha. He was put in Meerut jail for a year and a half.

In 1942, Maulana Azad again became President of the Indian National Congress, but this time he would be the head of the Congress Party during the Quit India Movement. He was arrested along with the entire Congress Working Committee for 3 long years, imprisoned at the fort in Ahmednagar. He remained President during those years as the party was unable to hold proper elections.

Maulana Azad was the staunchest high-profile Muslim opponent of Partition of India into India and Pakistan. He supported a confederation of autonomous provinces with their own constitutions but common defense and economy, an arrangement suggested in the British Cabinet Mission Plan of May 1946. According to Azad partition was against the grain of the Indian culture which did not believe in "divorce before marriage."

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His commentary on the Holy Quran is unique in the realm of Muslim liberation. Whatever role he was called upon to play whether in the field of literature or politics he lent to it a dignity and poise which was entirely his own. He is remembered as a learned scholar, a poet and writer of great skill.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad - Commemoration

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India and a close friend of Azad, paying a tribute in the Indian Parliament on 24 February 1958 said: "So we mourn today the passing of a great man, a man of luminous intelligence and a mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to it score."

Azad is featured on an Indian postage stamp; there are many schools, colleges, roads and hospitals all over India named after him,the most famous of which is the Maulana Azad medical college situated in old delhi on the site of an erstwhile british jail and flanked by the khooni darwaza, a commerative arch where the last of the mughal heirs were murdered by a british officer in 1857. It is consistently rated among the top ten medical colleges in india Azad was one of the negotiating members during both the Cripps Mission (1942) and the Cabinet Mission (1946). But with the strengthening of the Pakistan movement and worsening Hindu-Muslim relations, Azad's influence waned. He recorded his frustration in his letters and autobiography to the effect that the partition of India could have been avoided had the Congress High Command respected his idea about the accommodation of the viewpoints of Jinnah and the Muslim League. The Congress High Command was catastrophically wrong, he asserted, when it partially rejected the Cabinet Mission formula, which had been previously accepted by the Muslim League High Command. Azad was emphatically opposed to Nehru's view which, according to him, led to the collapse of the Cabinet Mission Plan and eventually to the partition of India on a communal basis. But the political difference lately developed between the two leaders did not weaken their personal friendship.

Although Azad was highly regarded amongst Congressmen and most nationalists, he did not have the level of popular support amongst the Muslim community enjoyed by Mohammed Ali Jinnah and failed to prevent the majority of Muslims from supporting partition. Azad abstained from voting when the All India Congress Committee voted on the partition plan, as he knew that the Congress Party was approving partition only in extreme, almost impossible conditions where the League threatened to instigate civil war and the government faced breakdown before independence

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD - JOURNALISM AND KHILAFAT

Azad was introduced to the freedom struggle by revolutionary Shri Shyam Sunder Chakravarthy. Most revolutionaries in Bengal

were Hindus. Azad greatly surprised his fellow Bengali (Hindu) revolutionaries with his willingness to join the freedom struggle. At first his peers were skeptical of his intentions. Azad found the revolutionary activities restricted to Bengal and Bihar. Within two years, Azad helped setup secret revolutionary centers all over north India and Bombay.

He started Urdu weekly, "Al-Hilal" a patriotic weekly. The paper was amazingly forceful, which antagonized the Britishers. Azad proclaimed his political credo in `Al-Hilal', it first appeared in 1912. As a mere literary effort it was unique in the history of Urdu language and literature. It was endowed with a rare combination of rhetoric and eloquence, of wit and poetry, of biting sarcasm and lofty idealism. All these moved the intelligentsia but what captured the imagination was the formulation of a newfaith. From the very day of its inception `Al-Hilal' soon became the focus where the resurgent spirit of India found its finest expression.

'It is due to the indolence of individuals that the souls of Nations sleep' this sentence epitomises the tempo that was set through the medium of his journal.

The British Government used the Press Act and then the Defense of India Regulations Act in 1916 to shut the journal down. Azad started a new journal, Al-Balgh, and roused the Muslim community through the Khilafat Movement. The aim of the movement was to re-instate the Khalifa as the head of British captured Turkey. Azad was one of its youngest leaders, along with Maulana Mohammad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali and Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari.

Azad, (Maulana) Abul Kalam (1888-1958) a striking personality among the ranks of Muslim thinkers and political activists advocating Indian nationalism based on the unity of all religio-ethnic communities. An outstanding politician of the Gandhian School and Education Minister of India, Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin (pen name Azad) was born in Mecca. His mother was an Arab and his father, Maulana Khairuddin, was a Bengal Muslim of Afghan origins. Khairuddin left India during the SEPOY REVOLT and proceeded to Mecca and settled there. He came back to Kolkata with his family in 1890.

Azad, with his Arabic mother tongue and orthodox family background, had to pursue a traditional Islamic education. But though he did not receive any modern education institutionally, through private studies and practice, he acquired proficiency in Urdu, Persian, Hindi and English. Like many other self-educated celebrities of his time, he taught himself world history and politics. He wrote many works, reinterpreting the Holy Quran, Hadith, fiqh and kalam. His erudition led him to repudiate Taqliq or the tradition of conformity and accept the principle of Tajdid or innovation. His concept of tajdid persuaded him to believe that all religions and ethnic peoples of India could make a happy federation of faiths and cultures within one independent state. This could, however, be possible only when, he believed, it would be based on democracy and secularism. In this regard, Azad was perhaps one of the earliest political thinkers of India to define and enunciate the idea of a secularist democracy for independent India.

As has been indicated already, by upbringing and education Azad was destined to be a clergyman. He mentions in his autobiography that most of his ancestors were religious divines. However, Azad had a political bent of mind. At a very early age he showed interest in politics. He developed interest in the pan-Islamic doctrines of Jamaluddin Afghani and the Aligarh thought of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Imbued with the pan-Islamic spirit, he visited Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey. But he returned to Calcutta with an altogether new perception of life and politics. In Iraq he met the exiled revolutionaries who were fighting to establish a constitutional government in Iran. In Egypt he met Shaikh Muhammad Abduh and Saeed Pasha and other revolutionary activists of the Arab world. He had a first hand knowledge of the ideals and spirit of the Young Turks in Constantinople. All these contacts turned him into a nationalist revolutionary. He adopted the pen name 'Azad' as a mark of his mental emancipation from a narrow view of religion and life.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, now a member of the central leadership of the All India National Congress as well as Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and CHITTA RANJAN DAS, was recognised by Gandhi as one of his most trusted lieutenants. He

was elected the president of the special session of the Congress in Delhi (1923) and the one in Ramgarh (1940). During the stormy politics of India in the 1930s and '40s, Azad emerged as one of Gandhi's most intimate advisor. In all negotiations from the CRIPPS MISSION (1942) to the CABINET MISSION (1946), Azad was very closely consulted by Gandhi, particularly on questions of constitutionality and communality. Azad was one of the negotiating members during both the Cripps Mission (1942) and the Cabinet Mission (1946). But it seems that with the strengthening of the Pakistan movement and worsening Hindu-Muslim relations, Azad's influence waned. He recorded his frustration in his letters and autobiography to the effect that the partition of India could have been avoided had the Congress High Command respected his idea about the accommodation of the viewpoints of Jinnah and the Muslim League.

The Congress High Command was catastrophically wrong, he asserted, when it partially rejected the Cabinet Mission formula, which had been previously accepted by the Muslim League High Command. Azad was emphatically opposed to Nehru's view which, according to him, led to the collapse of the Cabinet Mission Plan and eventually to the partition of India on a communal basis. But the political difference lately developed between the two leaders did not weaken their personal friendship which is manifested by his dedication of his famous autobiography India Wins Freedom to Nehru stating 'For Jawaharlal Nehru: Friend and Comrade'.

Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) was a Pan-Islamic movement influenced by Indian nationalism. The Ottoman Emperor Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) had launched a Pan-Islamic programme to use his position as the Sultan-Khalifa of the global Muslim community with a view to saving his disintegrating empire from foreign attacks and to crush the nationalistic democratic movement at home. The visit of his emissary, Jamaluddin Afghani, to India in the late nineteenth century to propagate Pan-Islamic ideas received a favourable response from some Indian Muslim leaders.

These sentiments intensified early in the twentieth century with the revocation in 1911 of the 1905 PARTITION OF BENGAL, the Italian (1911) and Balkan (1911-1912) attacks on Turkey, and Great Britain's participation in the First World War (1914-18) against Turkey.

The defeat of Turkey in the First World War and the division of its territories under the Treaty of Sevres (10 August 1920) among European powers caused apprehensions in India over the Khalifa's custodianship of the Holy places of Islam. Accordingly, the Khilafat Movement was launched in September 1919 as an orthodox communal movement to protect the Turkish Khalifa and save his empire from dismemberment by Great Britain and other European powers. The Movement was initiated by the Ali brothers, Muhammad Ali and Shawkat Ali, Maulana ABUL KALAM AZAD, Dr MA Ansari, and Hasrat Mohani. Khilafat Conferences were organised in several cities in northern India. A Central Khilafat Committee, with provisions for provincial branches, was constituted at Bombay with Seth Chotani, a wealthy merchant, as its President, and Shawkat Ali as its Secretary. In 1920 the Ali Brothers produced the Khilafat Manifesto. The Central Khilafat Committee started a Fund to help the Nationalist Movement in Turkey and to organise the Khilafat Movement at home.

Contemporaneously, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi led his non-violent nationalist movement satyagraha, as a protest against government repression evidenced, for example, in the Rowlatt Act of 1919, and the Jalian Wallah Bagh Massacres of April 1919. To enlist Muslim support in his movement, Gandhi supported the Khilafat cause and became a member of the Central Khilafat Committee. At the Nagpur Session (1920) of the INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS Gandhi linked the issue of Swaraj (Self-Government) with the Khilafat demands and adopted the non-cooperation plan to attain the twin objectives.

By mid-1920 the Khilafat leaders had made common cause with Gandhi's NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT promising non-violence in return for Gandhi's support of the Khilafat Movement whereby Hindus and Muslims formed a united front against British rule in India. Support was received also of Muslim theologians through the Jamiyat-al Ulama-i-Hind (The Indian Association of Muslim Theologians). Maulana MOHMMAD AKRAM KHAN of Bengal was a member of its Central Executive

and Constitution Committee. However, the movement's objectives of communal harmony and nonviolence suffered a setback because of the Hijrat (Exodus) to Afghanistan in 1920 of about 18,000 Muslim peasants, mostly from Sind and North Western Provinces, the excesses of Muslims who felt that India was Dar-ul-Harb (Apostate land), the Moplah rebellion in South India in August 1921, and the Chauri-Chaura incident in February 1922 in the United Provinces where a violent mob set fire to a police station killing twenty-two policemen. Soon after Gandhi called off the Non-cooperation movement, leaving Khilafat leaders with a feeling of betrayal.

The extra-territorial loyalty of Khilafat leaders received a final and deadly blow from the Turks themselves. The charismatic Turkish nationalist leader Mustafa Kemal's startling secular renaissance, his victories over invading Greek forces culminating in the abolition of the Sultanate in November 1922, and the transformation of Turkey into a Republic in October 1923, followed by the abolition of the Khilafat in March 1924, took the Khilafatists unaware. By 1924 the Khilafat Movement, had become devoid of any relevance and significance and met its end.

The first stirrings in favour of the Khilafat Movement in Bengal was seen on 30 December, 1918 at the 11th Session of the All India MUSLIM LEAGUE held in Delhi. In his presidential address, AK FAZLUL HUQ voiced concern over the attitude of Britain and her allies engaged in dividing and distributing the territories of the defeated Ottoman Empire.

When the Paris Peace Conference (1919) confirmed these apprehensions, Bengali Khilafat leaders such as Maulana Akram Khan, Abul Kasem, and MUJIBUR RAHMAN KHAN held a Public meeting in Calcutta on 9 February, 1919 to enlist public support in favour of preserving the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and saving the institution of Khilafat.

In Bengal, the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation Movement (1918 to 1924) became a mass movement in which both Muslims and Hindus participated. The Bengal movement benefited from coordinated action by and between the Central and Provincial Khilafat leaders. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad propagated Khilafat ideas in rural Bengal. In the initial stage, the movement was

popularised by Bengali leaders such as Maulana Akram Khan, MANIRUZZAMAN ISLAMABADI, Mujibur Rahman Khan, the brothers Maulana ABDULLAHIL KAFI and Maulana ABDULLAHIL BAQI, ISMAIL HOSSAIN SHIRAJI, Abul Kasem and AK Fazlul Huq. Maulana Akram Khan and Maniruzzaman Islambadi toured Bengal and organised Khilafat meetings, particularly in Dhaka and Chittagong. In an article Asahojogita-o-Amader Kartabya, Maniruzzaman Islambadi declared that to protect Khilafat and to acquire Swaraj were the twin aims of the movement and that it was the sacred duty of every Indian to support these ideas.

During the observance of the first Khilafat Day on 17 October 1919, most Indian-owned shops remained closed in Calcutta, prayers were offered at different mosques, and public meetings were held all over Bengal. On 23-24 November 1919 the first All-India Khilafat Conference held in Delhi was presided over by AK Fazlul Huq from Bengal. It was resolved that pending a resolution of the Khilafat problem there would be no participation in the proposed peace celebrations, that British goods should be boycotted, and that a policy of non-cooperation with the government would be adopted. In early 1920 the Bengal Provincial Khilafat Committee was organised with Maulana Abdur Rauf as President, Maniruzzaman Islambadi as Vice President, Maulana Akram Khan as General Secretary, and Mujibur Rahman and Majid Baksh as Joint Secretaries respectively. The office of the organisation was located at Hiron Bari Lane of Kolutola Street in Calcutta.

The first Bengal Provincial Khilafat Conference was held at the Calcutta Town Hall on 28-29 February 1920. Several members of the Central Khilafat Committee attended. Prominent Bengali Khilafat leaders such as A K Fazlul Huq, Abul Kasem, Mujibur Rahman participated in the conference and reiterated the view that unless their demands on the Khilafat problem were met non-cooperation and boycott would continue. The conference decided to observe 19 March 1920 as the Second Khilafat Day.

In March 1920 a Khilafat delegation led by Maulana Muhammad Ali went to England to plead for the Khilafat cause. Abul Kasem represented Bengal in this delegation. Local Khilafat

Committees were also constituted. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulvi Abdur Rahman became President and Secretary respectively of the Calcutta Khilafat Committee. On 20 December 1919 the Dhaka Committee was founded at the AHSAN MANZIL with Nawab KHWAJA HABIBULLAH as President, Syed Abdul Hafez as alternate President, and Gholam Quddus as Secretary. In response to the demands of the citizens of Dhaka, a "Sadar Khilafat Committee" was formed; Khwaja Sulaiman Kadar was its President, Maulana Abdul Jabbar Ansari, Hafez Abdur Razzak, Hafez Abdul Hakim its Vice-Presidents, and Maulvi Shamsul Huda its Secretary.

On 19 March 1920 the Second Khilafat Day was observed in Bengal. In Calcutta life almost came to a standstill and numerous Khilafat meetings were held in Dhaka, Chittagong and Mymensingh. The largest meeting was held in Tangail and was presided over by ABDUL HALIM GHAZNAVI, the liberal nationalist Muslim zamindar. At this meeting, Maniruzzaman Islambadi urged the public to adopt Satyagraha as the symbol of the Khilafat movement.

Most districts of Bengal witnessed a mushroom growth of Khilafat Committees alongside existing Congress Committees, often with common membership. This was the first significant anti-British mass movement in which Hindus and Muslims participated with equal conviction. The media, both Muslim and Hindu, played a vital role in popularising the movement. 'Mohammadi', 'Al-Eslam' and 'The Mussalman' were publications which deserve mention. The Khilafat Movement engendered a Muslim political consciousness that reverberated throughout Bengal under the leadership of Maulana Azad, Akram Khan, Maniruzzaman Islambadi, Bipin Chandra Pal and CHITTA RANJAN DAS. Though the Khilafat movement was orthodox in origin, it did manage to generate liberal ideas among Muslims because of the interaction and close understanding between Hindus and Muslims. Following the example of Calcutta, volunteer organisations were set up in rural Bengal to train volunteers to enforce boycott of foreign goods, courts, and government offices. They were also engaged in spinning, popularising items of necessity, and raising contributions for the Khilafat cause. In some

areas in Dhaka, Muslim zamindars extracted 'Khilafat Salami' from Muslim tenants by declaring themselves the representatives of the Sultan of Turkey. Ironically, due to the ignorance of these tenants this custom continued long after the Khilafat was abolished.

Visibly shaken by the popularity of the Movement, through a Notification on 19 November 1921 the Government of Bengal declared the activities of the Khilafat and Congress volunteers illegal. Government officers raided Khilafat offices, confiscated documents and papers, banned meetings, and arrested office bearers. About a hundred and fifty personalities including Maulana Azad, CR Das, Akram Khan, and Ambika Prashad Bajpai were arrested in Calcutta on 10 December 1921.

At this critical juncture, a rift arose among Khilafat and Non-cooperation leaders on the issue of boycotting educational institutions and legislative councils. Some Muslim leaders believed that such boycott would be suicidal for Muslims. They were in favour of participating in the elections under the India Act of 1919 that assured self-governing institutions in India.

Prominent among this group of Swarajist leaders were CR Das, BIPIN CHANDRA PAL, Motilal Nehru, SURENDRANATH BANERJEA, Ashutosh Chowdhury, ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE and SARAT CHANDRA BOSE. Notable Muslims subscribing to the same ideas were AK Fazlul Huq, Abul Kasem, Khwaja Muhammad Azam, Khwaja Afzal, Nawab Khwaja Habibullah, HAKIM HABIBUR RAHMAN, Syed NAWAB ALI CHOWDHURY, Sir Syed Shamsul Huda, Sir ABDULLAH AL-MAMUN SUHRAWARDI, Maulana Abu Bakr Siddiky (Pir of Furfura), Shah Ahsanullah, Kazem Ali and HUSEYN SHAHEED SUHRAWARDY. Indian National Congress and the Muslim nationalists were strongly opposed to the idea of joining the councils.

Eminent Hindu personalities in Bengal who supported the Khilafat movement were Bipin Chandra Pal, Shrish Chandra Chattopadhya, Kaminikumar Bandyopadhaya, Dr Rai Kumar Chakravarty, PC Ghosh, Basanta Kumar Majumdar, ASWINI KUMAR DUTTA, Pyarilal Roy, Gurucharan Aich, Sarat Kumar Gupta, Poet Mukunda Das, Haranath Ghosh, Nagendra Bhattacharya, Satindra Sen, Dr Tarini Gupta, Sarol Kumar Dutta,

Nishi Kanta Ganguly, Monoranjan Gupta, Sarat Kumar Ghosh, Nagendra Bijoy Bhattacharya, Nalini Das, Sailendra Nath Das, Khitish Chandra Roy Chowdhury and many others.

Though the Khilafat movement ended abruptly, the political activities it gave rise to and the experience gained therefrom, proved invaluable to Bengali Muslims after the 1947 partition. Among the numerous participants in the Khilafat movement from Bengal the names of some representative notable personalities are mentioned below: Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani originally from Pabna but later settled at Kagmari, in Tangail district, Zahiruddin Tarafdar (Mymensingh), Abul Mansur Ahmed (Mymensingh), Abul Kalam Shamsuddin (Mymensingh), Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (Calcutta), Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish (Pabna), Habibur Rahman Chowdhury (Comilla), Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chowdhury (Comilla), Shah Badrul Alam (Chittagong), Maulvi Aman Ali (Chittagong), Nurul Huq Chowdhury (Chittagong), Muhammad Waliullah (Chittagong), Kazem Ali Miah (Chittagong) Tamizuddin Khan (Faridpur), Pir Badshah Miah (Faridpur), Moazzem Hossain Chowdhury alias Lal Miah (Faridpur), Justice Muhammad Ibrahim (Faridpur), Majid Baksh (Barisal), Abul Kashem (Barisal), Khan Bahadur Hemayetuddin Ahmed (Barisal), Poet Mozammel Huq (Bhola) Hashem Ali Khan (Barisal), Wahed Reza Chowdhury of Ulania (Barisal), Sultan Ahmed Chowdhury (Barisal), Majed Kazi of Kasbah (Barisal), Khan Sahib Hatem Ali Jamadar (Barisal), Syed Muhammad Afzal (Pirojpur), Ismail Khan Chowdhury (Barisal), Maulvi Muhammad Ibrahim (Noakhali), Abdul Jabbar Khaddar (Noakhali), Abdul Gofran (Noakhali), Syed Ahmed Khan (Noakhali), Nasir Ahmad Bhuiyan (Noakhali), Suren Chandra Das Gupta (Bogra), Hussein Ahmed (Gaibandha), Rajibuddin Tarafdar (Bogra), Kabiraj Sheikh Abdul Aziz (Bogra), Ishaq Gokuli (Bogra), Maulana Maniruddin Anwari (Dinajpur), Shomeshwar Prasad Chowdhury (Burdwan), Shah Abdul Hamid (Rangpur), Afsaruddin Ahmed (Khulna), Sukumar Bandyopadhaya (Kushtia), Maulvi Shamsuddin Ahmed (Kushtia), Syed Majid Baksh (Jessore) and Maulana Ahmed Ali (Khulna).

In addition to the front-rank leaders of the Khilafat movement, a new class of Muslim leaders emerged during this period from

urban as well as from distant parts of Bengal. They gained experience in organising and mobilising the public. The Khilafat movement provided an opportunity to throw up a new Mofassil based leadership which played a key role in introducing a coherent self-assertive political identity for Bengali Muslims. After the 1947 Partition, these personalities played effective roles in their respective areas of activity.

IT was not only Jinnah whom Gandhi and the Congress spurned. They spurned also Muslims within their own ranks. V.P. Menon noted: "Nationalist Muslims found themselves in a particularly difficult position. They felt that, unless the Congress could reassure the Muslims, it would not be possible to win their support in the coming elections [in 1946]. Towards the end of August 1945, Abul Kalam Azad approached Gandhiji with a plan for a settlement." Menon summarised the plan and remarked that he was unaware of the Congress' response. The Working Committee's resolution in September accepted the right of secession; only vaguely hinted at the partition of Punjab and Bengal - which Jinnah could notice but not his followers - and declared that the Congress would approach Muslims directly.

In his memoirs, Azad suppressed his letter of August 2, 1945, and Gandhi's reply of August 16. They were published in 1976 in Vol. VI of Transfer of Power (pages 155-157; Seervai's Partition of India; 1994; pages 38-39). Like Rajaji, Azad proposed "to leave entirely to Muslims the question of their status in the future Constitution of India". Gandhi replied on August 16: "I did not infer from your letter that you are writing about my Hindus. Whatever you have in your heart has not appeared in your writing. But don't worry. We will talk the matter over when next we meet if you so desire. Whatever you want to say about the communal problem should not be said without consulting me and the Working Committee. I am also of the opinion that it would be better to keep quiet... . My opinion differs from your (sic)" (Transfer of Power, Vol. VI, page 172). Both letters had been intercepted by the government.

Azad wrote to Sardar Patel on August 13, urging acceptance of the right to secede. "Time has now come when the Muslim Nationalists should recognise themselves and place their point of

view before the Muslims in general." Patel asked him on August 29 to put it before the Working Committee (Sardar's Letters Mostly Unknown; Vol. 4, pages 171-172).

Azad had nothing to offer to the Muslim voter. Neither had Nehru and Patel. The League swept the polls. M. Asaf Ali's memoirs explain how marginalised Azad and he were. In December 1943, Azad reviewed with him and Syed Mahmud "the Congress-Muslim position". "Personally I [Asaf Ali] think it is time that merciless self-criticism was undertaken by nationalist Muslims and Hindu Congressmen. Indian Muslims as a bulk are dissatisfied with the policies of the Congress, howsoever well intentioned they may have been. A practical politician would take note of it and alter the course of his policies... ." In July 1944, Asaf Ali noted that "certain persons [that is, Jinnah] and policies are like the red rag to him [Nehru] and the very mention of them sends him into an unreasonable outburst of passion, expressed more in his tense face... the impression of a proud and unreasoning victim of volcanic emotions".

He asked what was the solution to the communal issue "if not the one proposed by Jinnah? Could any political progress be made without solving this question?... He [Nehru] was frankly not hopeful of any deal with Jinnah, who he thought was not aware of the world forces and economic developments... "

Patel made no secret of his contempt for Congress Muslims even in prison. "Patel & Co. have time and again, spoken in a manner rather ironical, indicating that Mahmud, I and (less marked) Maulana don't come up to their mark," Asaf Ali wrote.

In January 1948, Patel questioned Azad's patriotism. But the unkindest cut was Gandhi's stance. On July 24, 1947, he wrote to Nehru opposing Azad's membership of the first Cabinet of free India. "Sardar is decidedly against his membership." So, "name another Muslim for the Cabinet".

That was Azad's lot; insulted by Jinnah as "a show-boy" and distrusted by Gandhi and Patel for his espousal of Muslim interests from a nationalist viewpoint. The nationalist Muslim had no role to play. The Congress left the field to the League. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had a secret meeting with Quid-e-Azam-Mohammed

Ali. Jinnah in May 1947 in Delhi. After the usual exchange of Islamic greetings, Maulana Azad asked Quid-e-Azam, "Why are you dividing the Muslims of India into three parts?" Quid-e-Azam replied, "No. I am dividing them into two, not three." Then Maulana responded, "East Pakistan will not remain with you for more than 25 years- there will be fight of cultures." After this remark of Maulana Azad, Quid-e-Azam looked deep into his eyes and remarked, "Maulana, I am giving the Muslims a fortress to regain their past glory and history. If they don't realise this, then may God help them." At this reply, the Maulana almost sprang up and embraced Quid-e-Azam and for the first and last time he addressed Jinnah as Quid-e-Azam.

The Maulana exclaimed, "If that is how you feel, then in the name of Allah I am also with you (Agar Yehi Appaki Niyat Hai to Bismillah, Mai Bhi Aapka Saath Hun)". (This ref page 28, "Select Writings and Speeches" of Syed Badrudduja compiled and edited by Mohammed Ali Syed, Bar at Law.) Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the right hand person of Quid-e-Azam. Congress did not like the two friends move together; therefore they made Maulana President of All India Congress. After the partition of India in 1947 Maulana perhaps got back his realisation, it is said he told to many Muslim leaders go, go back to Pakistan and strangthen them. Thereafter Shaheed and Sher-e-Bangla Fazlul Haq returned to East Pakistan.

My strong belief and hope, Pakistanis will not allow the same history to be repeated in the future.

Maulana Azad, as an Indian Muslim, rises to the challenge

How to retain India's integrity, while addressing the anxiety and concerns of Muslims? The entire Congress leadership struggled with this issue of resolving the communal problems. Maulana Azad rose to the occasion, which was embraced by the Congress leadership and Gandhi.

"I gave continuous and anxious thought to this subject. Ultimately, I came to the conclusion that the Constitution of India must from the nature of the case be federal. Further, it must be so framed as to ensure COMPLETE AUTONOMY to the provinces in as many subjects as possible. We had to reconcile the claims

of provincial autonomy with national unity. This could be done by finding a satisfactory formula for the distribution of powers and functions between the Central and the Provincial Government. Some powers and functions could be essentially central, others essentially provincial and some which could be either provincially or centrally exercised by consent. The first step was to devise a formula by which a minimum number of subjects should be declared as essentially the responsibility of the Central Government.

... The more I thought about the matter, the clearer it became to me that the Indian problem could not be solved on any other basis. If a Constitution was framed which embodied this principle, it would ensure that in the Muslim majority provinces, all subjects except those three (i.e., defence, communication and foreign affairs) could be administered by the province itself. This would eliminate from the mind of the Muslims all fears of domination by the Hindus. Once such fears were allayed, it was likely that the provinces would find it an advantage to delegate some other subjects as well to the Central Government." [pp. 147-148]

"The Working Committee (of Congress) was initially somewhat sceptical about the solution and members raised all kinds of difficulties and doubts. I was able to meet their objections and clarified doubtful points. Finally the Working Committee was convinced about the soundness of the proposal and Gandhiji expressed his complete agreement with the solution.

Gandhiji in fact complimented me by saying that I had found a solution of a problem which had till then baffled everybody. He said that my solution would allay the fear of even the most communal among the Muslim Leaguers and at the same time it was inspired by a national and not a sectional outlook." [p. 149]

a. The ball rolls into Jinnah's/Muslim League's court

Congress and Gandhi were on board as far as Maulana Azad's suggestion was concerned. How did the Muslim League react?

"The Muslim League had for the first time spoken of a possible division of India in its Lahore Resolution. ... The solution I suggested was intended to meet the fears of the Muslim League. Now that I had discussed my scheme with my colleagues and members of

the Cabinet Mission, I felt that the time had come to place it before the country. Accordingly on 15 April 1946, I issues a statement dealing with the demands of Muslims and other minorities." [pp. 149-150]

Dr. Bain referred to this rather lengthy statement while quoting Maulana Azad in regard to his position on the Two Nations Theory and its ramifications, and why division of India with India and Pakistan as two separate entities would be worse for Muslims themselves.

Muslim League vacillated over the scheme articulated by Maulana Azad and later ratified by Congress. Even the Cabinet Mission was on board with the scheme. Muslim League's Lahore Resolution was somewhat vague and it was time for Jinnah and Muslims League to take some more specific position.

"At first Mr. Jinnah was completely opposed to the scheme. The Muslim League had gone so far in its demand for a separate independent state that it was difficult for it to retrace its steps. The Mission had stated in clear and unambiguous terms that they could never recommend the partition of the country and the formation of an independent state. ...[T]hey could not see how a state like the Pakistan envisaged by the Muslim League could be viable and stable.

... The Muslim League Council met for three days before it could come to a decision. On the final day, Mr. Jinnah had to admit that there could be no fairer solution of the minority problem than that presented in the Cabinet Mission Plan. In any case, he could not get better terms. He told the Council that the scheme presented by the Cabinet Mission was the maximum that we could secure. As such, HE ADVISED THE MUSLIM LEAGUE TO ACCEPT THE SCHEME AND THE COUNCIL VOTED UNANIMOUSLY IN ITS FAVOR."

b. In his own words, Maulana Azad's GREATEST BLUNDER

Maulana Azad was the president of the Congress from 1939-1946, some of the most tumultuous and critical segments of India's independence struggle.

Just when "...the political and communal problems seemed to be solved, a new subject now demanded my attention. ... The

question naturally arose that there should be fresh Congress elections and a new president chosen. As soon as this was mooted in the press, a general demand arose that I should be reelected President for another term. The main argument in favour of my reelection was that I had been in charge of negotiations with Cripps, with Lord Wavell and at present with the Cabinet Mission. At the Simla Conference, I had for the first time succeeded in arriving at a successful solution of the political problem even though the Conference finally broke on the communal issue. There was a general feeling in Congress that since I had conducted the negotiations till now, I should be charged with the task of bringing them to a successful close and implementing them. Congress circles in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Bihar and the UP openly expressed the opinion that I should be charged with the responsibility of launching free India in its course." [p. 161]

On the issue of electing a new president, Maulana Azad became aware of some differences of opinion in the "inner circles of the Congress High Command." [p. 161] Apparently, Sardar Patel and his supporters wanted him to be the president. After carefully considering various aspects, Maulana came to the conclusion that he had been president for long enough and did not permit others to propose his name. Gandhi also concurred with his decision. The next decision he had to make was the choice of a successor. His decision was in favor of Jawaharlal Nehru, his long time colleague and partner-in-struggle in Congress. His suggested choice prevailed, especially with the blessing from Gandhi. However, this he regretted later as "perhaps the greatest blunder of my political life."

"I acted according to my best judgment but the way things have shaped since then has made me realise that this was perhaps the greatest blunder of my political life. I have regretted no action of mine so much as the decision to withdraw from the Presidentship of the Congress at this critical juncture. It was a mistake which I can describe in Gandhiji's words as one of HIMALAYAN DIMENSION." [p. 162]

c. Nehru throws in a FATAL monkey wrench

"The Muslim League Council had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan. So had the Congress Working Committee. It however needed

the approval of the AICC. We thought this would be a formal matter as the AICC had always ratified the decisions of the Working Committee. ... When the AICC met, I invited Jawaharlal to take over as Congress President from me." p. 163] Maulana Azad made the case for the Cabinet Mission Plan. Despite major opposition, including the leftists, his presentation "had a decisive influence on the audience" and the resolution was "passed with an overwhelming majority. Thus the seal of approval was put on the Working Committee's resolution accepting the Cabinet Mission Plan." [p. 164]

Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps were happy that Congress accepted Maulana Azad's resolution and congratulated him on his able presentation of the Cabinet Mission Plan. But all these were too premature.

"Now happened one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history. On 10 July, Jawaharlal held a press conference in Bombay in which he made an astonishing statement. Some press representatives asked him whether, with the passing of the Resolution by the AICC, the Congress had accepted the Plan in toto, including the compositions of the Interim Government.

Jawaharlal in reply stated that Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly 'completely unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations as they arise'.

Press representatives further asked if this meant that the Cabinet Mission Plan could be modified.

Jawaharlal replied emphatically that the Congress had agreed only to participate in the Constituent Assembly and regards itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought best.

The Concept of Pakistan

Jinnah picked up the word Pakistan first time coined by Rehmat Ali, an Indian student in Cambridge in 1933, and launched an aggressive propagation of two-nation theory. Getting the support of the political Islamists including the premiers of Punjab and Bengal Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan and A.K.Fazlur Rahman respectively, the AIML in its Lahore session in 1940 adopted a

resolution demanding partition of the country with a separate state of Pakistan for Muslims.

With the demand for a separate state for Muslims, Jinnah emerged as a pan-Indian Muslim leader and was popularly known as 'Qaid-e-Azam' (Great leader). He became so popular that even the exchange of population, his most impractical solution as basis for bifurcation of the country did not find opposition in Muslim masses. Thus, we find that the political ideology of Iqbal, medieval psyche of the Muslim masses and manipulative genius of Jinnah with his obsessive egoism combined together in the sectarian aspirations of Muslim League. Gradually, his separatist movement became a binding force to unite the Muslims behind the demand for Pakistan.

The conviction of the Muslims that they are a distinct nationality due to their separate cultural and religious identity became so deep that in Constituent Assembly election in 1946, AIML "secured 425 out of 496 reserved for the Muslims. It could be said therefore, that the Indian Muslims were overwhelmingly in favour of Pakistan" (Islamic influence in Indian Society by Prof. M. Mujeeb, Former V.C. of Jamia Milia, 1972). This conviction gradually became a major source to strengthen the political ideology of AIML. Despite the pacifying effort of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress party, Jinnah remained obdurate on the issue of Pakistan and accelerated the movement by igniting the religious and cultural distinction of the Muslims more and more violent. Under these circumstances, when Pakistan was born on August 14, 1947 after truncation of India it was the victory of Islam for Muslim orthodoxy.

"The obvious reason for the separation from India of the region, that is now called Pakistan, were the irreconcilable difference between the two major communities inhabiting it" (Fom Jinnah to Zia :Muhammad Munir, Chief Justice of Pakistan, Rtd, 1980, Page19, Lahore). Maulana Maudoodi, the founder of the JEI while departing for Pakistan in his message addressed to Indian Muslims said:

"Islam by virtue of which you call yourselves as Muslims, its spirit is ceaselessly at war with the unholy spirit of secularand national democracy and its foundational principles. Islam and

this system can never go together. If you really believe in Islam which was revealed by God through Muhammed, then wherever you are you must resist the establishment of this nationalistic secular democracy" (Indian Muslims by Asghar Ali Engineer, 1985, page 128-29).

It is a known fact of modern Indian history that the AIML was founded to carry forward the non-secular intention of Muslim thinkers after collapse of Muslim power in India. A large majority of Indian Muslims, who stayed back in India after partition belonged to All India Muslim League (AIML) and supported its demand for a separate land for them. It was expected that Muslims in new State of India would completely bury the separatist two-nation ideology. But the way their leadership continued voicing concern over the grievances of its community shows that the ghost of Muslim League remained haunting their mind.

"While writing in his journal 'Al Hilal' during 1913, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had said that no Muslim need join any political party. Islam itself is a party whose name is Hizbullah. The Imam and the Sultan are rolled into one and this integrated concept was personified by the Caliph of the representative of the Prophet" (Muslim League's Unfinished Agenda by Prafull Goradia, 2003, page 30). But in changed circumstances Azad not only joined the Congress but also accepted a berth in Nehru cabinet. He projected himself as a secular Muslim leader and accepted India also as an abode for the followers of Islam. However, his co-religionists failed to cut off their mental links with the separatist agenda of Muslim League and allowed their leaders to exploit them as pawns in the communal play being played by the ruling elite to manage political power.

The bitter hangover of the communal struggle of AIML and its violent and disturbing role continuously polluted the mental under-current of Indian Muslims. Maulana Azad made some effort for secular mobility of the Muslims asking them not to launch any political party exclusively for Muslims but failed to convince them decisively. "At the Lucknow conference on December28, 1948, Maulana Azad called for a liquidation of all communal organisations. He advised even Jamaat-e-Ulema Hind to keep scrupulously aloof from political squabbles" (Secularisation

of Muslim Behaviour by Moin Shakir, 1973, page 64). "After Independence the secular nationalist approach of Maulana Azad failed and the separatist approach of the Muslim League, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI) and a section of Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Hind (JUH) gained ground" (Ibid. Page 65).

EMERGENCE OF INDIAN UNION MUSLIM LEAGUE

The birth of Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) from the womb of AIML in December 1947 was a part of that intention, which helped in keeping the spirit of the mother organisation alive and gave a message to Indian Muslims - Muslim League is dead - Long Live Muslim league. Though, the IUML could not expand its base beyond some pockets of south India, the very existence of a political party exclusively for Muslims remained a source of agony for non-Muslims. The silence of Indian Muslims over the birth of IUML on the other hand also widened the gap of mistrust between the two communities. Thus, the greater challenge the Indian Muslims have been facing since Independence is that of Indian nationalism. "In strict sense a nationalism can exist only in a State whose citizens are all Muslims and could so behave" (Nicola A.Zidaeh: Islam in modern World, Dacca, 1964, page 164-65: Quoted by Moin Shakir in his book 'Secularisation of Muslim Behaviour, 1973, page21).

Mohammad Ismail, the founder President of IUML, the first political party of Muslims in new State of India even bargained with Congress to "recognise the League as sole representative of Muslims" (A.G.Noorani - The Muslims in India, page7, 2003). The Congress did not oblige Ismail but for its vote bank politics, encouraged the Muslims to raise voice over the issues related to their religious identity. Bharati Muslims convention in November 1953 at Aligarh was the first attempt by a group of Muslims in this direction, which had a far reaching consequence in isolation of the Muslims from the rest of the population.

The British offered separate electorates, reservation of seats in municipalities and legislative assemblies to wean away the Muslim elite. The Indian National Congress while coming to power in new state of India adopted the similar tactics of the British to inculcate the habit among the Muslims for expecting special

consideration from the government. It provided special privilege to the Muslims in the name of religious minority, when they were deprived of the concessions after partition. Granting new constitutional status under Article 29 and 30 and providing partial treatment to religious minority, the Congress helped the Muslims to revive the politics earlier played by the Muslim League. The same Congress party, which had rejected the proposal of Jinnah in 1937 for a coalition Government with Muslim League, joined the coalition government in Kerala with IUML. Such opportunistic design of the Congress encouraged the political Islamists to raise collective voice against the alleged injustice to their community.

AIML disappeared from Indian political scene after partition. Even the JEI remained on the periphery of Muslim politics in India. However, their separatist ideological path remained the main ingredient of Muslim politics in the country. 'Islam is in danger'; opposition to Vande Mataram song, tri-colour flag, use of Hindi at the cost of Urdu, anti-cow slaughter stand of the Hindus and the Hindu-Muslim riots in which Muslim suffered more were the frivolous charges and grievances of Jinnah against the 'Hindu-Congress'. These demands however, re-emerged as 'genuine grievances' of Muslims even after the death of Jinnah in 1948.

Demand for separate district of Malappuram on the plea of Muslim majority area by the IUML, Muslims obsession to Islamic personal law, linking Aligarh Muslim University with religious identity of Muslims exposed their non-secular intention. Are the issues like Urdu, reservation for Muslims, caw slaughter, opposition to Vande Mataram song in school prayer and call for communal solidarity in the name of distinct cultural identity etc which were raised by AIML still not relevant for Muslim politics in the country? Moin Shakir, a noted Muslim writer rightly observed, "Although politically Islam is the dying ideology of the stagnant elite, yet it cannot be replaced unless a change in the political elite takes place" (Secularisation of Muslim Behaviour, page72).

The Muslim elite carried forward the separatist legacy of Muslim League, which was basically meant to ensure that the Muslims are not absorbed in the Indian nation. They overlooked the historical consequences of the separatist movement launched

by political Islamists like Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, Mohammad Iqbal, Jinnah and Maulana Maudoodi and carried the burden of the League on their shoulders and thereby failed to remove politics out of the frame of religion. Had they guided the Muslim masses to join the issues, which affect every citizen of the country they could have become part of the national mainstream. Instead they encouraged them to work as pawns of the Congress to implement its vote bank policy. Later, almost all the political parties used the same tactics for Muslim votes. Absence of any honest and assertive leader in the community for proper counseling to Muslim masses became a remote possibility.

Except in Kashmir, Muslims remained scattered and isolated in various states of India after partition. They might have realised their mistake for supporting partition but the separatist approach of Muslim organisations like IUML, JEIH, JUH, Muslim Majalish-e-Mushawarat under the control of the elite section in the community did not guide them to accept the reality of secular democracy. When the forces behind the movement for Hindu nationalism raised their voice against them, the Muslim orthodoxy aggressively propagated its reactionary design and supported the political design of the Muslim elite. Thus, they allowed the centuries old Hindu-Muslim problem to remain a permanent problem of this country.

Unfortunately, India has so far not produced any Muslim leader after Independence for the secular mobility of Muslim masses to negate Jinnah. Absence of mass scale modern education from primary level onward ghettoised them and kept them confined to their medieval shell. Even today the legacy of reservation for Muslims initially demanded by Muslim League and accepted by the British is raised by a section of Muslim intellectuals. Saleem Akhtar and Nafees Ahmad in a joint paper entitled " Reservation for Muslims: A need of hour" suggested reservation for Muslims as solution to their integration in national mainstream. They said, "the reservation policy requires urgent restructuring so that the Muslims get integrated in the national mainstream."

The present leadership of the Muslims in stead of transforming the medieval mindset of the community into modern and liberal

outlook is still promoting religious orthodoxy and cultural conservatism in the name of religious identity. In real terms, there is no problem for any Muslim in any secular polity if his or her religious identity is confined to the five basic principles of Islam which are - Kalama (There is no God but God), five times Namaz (Prayer) a day, Zakaat (Donation for welfare of the poor), Roza (Fasting) during the month of Ramdan and Haz (Pilgrimage to Mecca).

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a member of Indian National Congress regrets that he did not accept Congress president ship in 1946, which led Nehru to assume that office and give the statements that could be exploited by the Muslim League for creation of Pakistan and withdrawal of its acceptance of the Cabinet Plan that envisaged an Indian Union of all the provinces and states of the sub-continent with safeguards for minorities. He had persuaded the pro-Congress Ulema that their interests would be better safeguarded under a united India, and that they should repose full confidence in Indian nationalism. However, they should make efforts to secure for themselves the control of Muslim personal law, by getting a guarantee from the Indian National Congress, that the Muslim personal law would be administered by qadis (judges) who were appointed from amongst the Ulema.

In a bid to weaken the Muslim League's claim to represent all Muslims of the subcontinent, the Congress strengthened its links with the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Hind, the Ahrars and such minor and insignificant non-League Muslim groups as the Momins and the Shia Conference.

Along with its refusal to share power with the Muslim League, the Congress pursued an anti-Muslim League policy in another direction with the help of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Hind . It was not enough to keep the Muslim League out of power. Its power among the people should be weakened and finally broken. Therefore, it decided to bypass Muslim political leadership and launch a clever movement of contacting the Muslim masses directly to wean them away from the leadership that sought to protect them from the fate of becoming totally dependent on the sweet will of the Hindu majority for their rights, even for their continued existence. This strategy -- called Muslim Mass Contact Movement -- was

organized in 1937 with great finesse by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. Congress leaders .... employed Molvis to convert the Muslim masses to the Congress creed. The Molvis, having no voice in the molding of the Congress policy and program, naturally could not promise to solve the real difficulties of the masses, a promise which would have drawn the masses towards the Congress. The Molvis and others employed for the work tried to create a division among the Muslim masses by carrying on a most unworthy propaganda against the leaders of the Muslim League. However, this Muslim mass contact movement failed.

It is pertinent to note here that a small section of the Deoband School was against joining the Congress. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (1863-1943) was the chief spokesman of this group. Later Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Othmani (1887-1949), a well-known disciple of Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani and a scholar of good repute, who had been for years in the forefront of the Jamiat leadership quit it with a few other Deoband Ulema, and became the first president of the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam established in 1946 to counteract the activities of the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Hind. However, the bulk of the Deoband Ulema kept on following the lead of Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani and the Jamiat in opposing the demand for Pakistan.

Contrary to the plea of the nationalist Ulema, the Muslim intelligentsia was worried that the end of British domination should not become for the Muslims the beginning of Hindu domination. They perceived through the past experience that the Hindus could not be expected to live with them on equal terms within the same political framework.

Therefore they did not seek to change masters. A homeland is an identity and surely the Muslims of the sub-continent could not have served the cause of universal brotherhood by losing their identity, which is what would have inevitably happened if they had been compelled to accept the political domination of the Hindus. The Ulema thought in terms of a glorious past and linked it unrealistically to a nebulous future of Muslim brotherhood. This more than anything else damaged the growth of Muslim nationalism and retarded the progress of Muslims in the sub-continent.

The nationalist Ulema failed to realize this simple truth and eventually found themselves completely isolated from the mainstream of the Muslim struggle for emancipation. Their opposition to Pakistan on grounds of territorial nationalism was the result of their failure to grasp contemporary realities. They did not realize that majorities can be much more devastating, specifically when it is an ethnic, linguistic or religious majority which cannot be converted into a minority through any election.

The Ulema, as a class, concentrated on jurisprudence and traditional sciences. They developed a penchant for argument and hair splitting. This resulted in their progressive alienation from the people, who while paying them the respect due to religious scholars, rejected their lead in national affairs. While their influence on the religious minded masses remained considerable, their impact on public affairs shrank simply because the Ulema concentrated on the traditional studies and lost touch with the realities of contemporary life

8

MAULANA AZAD'S COMMENT ON GANDHI

Gandhi, the Mahatma, truly considered himself a citizen of the world though he worked for the freedom of the Indian nation from foreign yoke. 'My religion has no geographical boundaries,' he explained to Kakasaheb Kalekar. 'If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself.' It was that brand of religion that taught him to believe in the soul and rely solely on soul force to fight all the ills in human hearts.

Humanity was his religion. He believed that for victory, war was the most blunt weapon, and the sharpest one was obviously non-violence. He abhorred the concept of might being the right.

Gandhi's saying -- 'Most religious men I have met are politicians in disguise. I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart, a religious man!' -- remains the key to the value system of the political philosophy he adhered to. Gandhi entered politics to fight irreligion. He also accepted the fact that he might not be absolutely accurate as regards his words used. This is the hallmark of a truly great person.

Truth for him was god. And non-violence, or soul force, was his only means of fighting the ills of life. He was not a nationalist in the narrow parochial sense. Gandhi was at pains to explain to American writer Jeanette Eaton that his nationalism in reality is intense internationalism.

'Our nationalism can be no peril to other nations in as much as we will exploit none, just as we allow none to exploit us.' In her book, 'Gandhi: Fighter Without A Sword', Eaton narrates that the greatest influence of Gandhi on her was Gandhi's notions on

oneness of the world. Gandhi told C.R. Das: 'How heartening it is to imagine that when there is One World and no militarised boundaries and all the natural and human resources, all the sciences and technology which are today marshalled and arrayed for destructive purposes, will be used for the elimination of poverty, ill-health and ignorance. They shall be used for promoting goodwill and for creating better conditions of life for the whole humanity. Though this rosy picture is today the privilege only of the poets and the utopian dream of idealists, there is no doubt that this is the cherished hope of everyone who strives for harmony.'

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his 'India Wins Freedom' states that Gandhiji is universally acknowledged as the greatest man of his age because despite affecting the destiny of the whole sub-continent, he held no high office nor did he rule countries. By sacrificing political gains, he bought peace like all true thinkers and philosophers.

He was above all the frivolities of political life, drawing strength from what he termed 'soul force', an inner strength that comes only when one believes in non-violence and truth and has abiding faith in the innate goodness of fellow beings. It was this quality that made Gandhi a leader of the world leaders.

Maulana Abdul Waheed Siddiqui, a noted Islamic theologian and founder editor of Nai Duniya Urdu weekly, writes in Gandhi Number issue of Oct 2, 1953, on the importance that Gandhi laid on Hindu-Muslim unity. Gandhi told Siddiqui that India could never reach her goal if she were hit by Hindu-Muslim hostility.

He threw himself in the struggle to heal the breach between the two communities. He supported Muslims in the Khilafat campaign and agitated for the release from the prison of the Ali brothers. It was at this time too that the Khadi movement was inaugurated.

Because he possessed such an enlightened and secular world view, Gandhi unhesitatingly advocated the causes of Hindu-Muslim unity, social progress, religious tolerance, spread of modern knowledge, individual liberty and above all educational reforms. He had the courage of a statesman for initiating reforms. However, he did not live long enough to see his ideas implemented as the

life of this saint who advocated non-violence was cut short by a most heinous act of violence.

Duty to Gandhi was of paramount importance. He said: 'Duties to self, to the family, to the country and to the world are not independent of one another. One cannot do good to the country by injuring the world at large.'

Tagore had feared that Gandhi would fail. Wrote Tagore: 'Perhaps he will not succeed. Perhaps he will fail as the Buddha failed, as Christ failed and as Lord Mahavira failed to wean men from their inequities, but he will be remembered as one who made his life an example for all ages to come.'

Will Durant, in an article in The Manchester Guardian, said: 'Perhaps Gandhi failed as saints are likely to fail in this very hostile, selfish and Darwinian world. But these very failures are the eternal successes attained by saintly people as they can never stoop to the detestable levels of this materialistic world in which each one is running after god of Mammon.'

MOULANA AND HIS EASSY A MASTERPIECE

Millions of people are born in this world. Most of them are soon forgotten while some others leave their footprints in the sands of time for posterity. Such people - leaders, philosophers, scientists, saints and holy men - are a fountain of inspiration. Their teachings, and even certain incidents from their lives serve as a beacon light that illuminates the way for generations that follow. This book contains over a 100 thought-provoking anecdotes gleaned from the lives of various great people. They impart instant lessons of life generally not found in school or college textbooks. They leave a deep impression upon the mind and appeal to one\'s sense of ethics.A well-documented book, it makes excellent reading for everyone. Children of impressionable age will get to learn basic values in a fun way. The author of this book, J.M. Mehta is a post graduate in English literature and a topper in B.Ed examination from the Punjab University.

After a brief service in the Punjab Education Department, he was selected for the Indian Foreign Service (IFS). He held various responsible assignments both at the headquarters and abroad

including postings in the U.K., Russia, Kenya, Vietnam and the Philippines. The author, after retiring from the Ministry of External Affairs in 1993, has been devoting much of his time to reading and writing.

Twilight in Delhi is the only Indian novel that called for the freedom of India from British Rule. It brings history alive, depicting most movingly the decay of an entire culture and the way of life. First published by the Hogarth Press in 1940, Twilight in Delhi was widely acclaimed by critics and hailed in India, and all over the English speaking world, as a major literary event. It has since become a great classic, and is now available as a Rupa publication. Twilight in Delhi has been translated into French, Spanish, Italian and Urdu.

Novelist, poet, critic, diplomat, scholar Ahmed Ali was born in Delhi in 1910. Educated at Aligarh and Lucknow universities, Ahmed Ali became famous in 1932 with the publication of Angarey in Urdu. He co-founded the All India Progressive Writers' Movement and Association and was the pioneer of the modern Urdu short story. After the Indian subcontinent was divided he lived in Pakistan and established embassies in China and Morocco. He had a deep interest in Sufism and a passion for Ghalib.

Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad wrote his essay on Sarmad when he was 23. His essay was hailed as a masterpiece. Some scholars have traced in this essay the genesis and growth of Azad's religious thought and political life. With his wide learning and political insights, V.N. Datta gives altogether a different perspective by arguing that Azad saw in this essay on Sarmad a lucid mirror of his own life and experiences. He seeks to answer why Azad wrote his essay, what gave impulse to his thoughts, and what were the leading ideas of his essay, which were to nourish and sustain his thinking and political life subsequently.

Having achieved in twenty years what others could not have done in 200 years, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, passed away on May 26, 1908, at Lahore. The last words on his tongue were, 'Allah, my beloved Allah.' To his beloved Allah he went back, to Whom he belonged. May Allah shower his choicest favours and blessings on him. Ameen!

Tributes paid to him, on his death, were galore. But we reproduce below only a few selected ones from non-Ahmadis to show what his contemporaries (other than his followers) thought, who also had watched him lead a spotlessly clean, pious and Godfearing life, and conduct almost single-handed Jihad on innumerable fronts.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was an outstanding religious leader of the subcontinent and an author, who later joined the political movement against the British, went to prison, and ultimately became, after independence, the Federal Minister of Education in the Nehru Government of India. He was acting as the editor of the Vakeel of Amritsar (Punjab), a paper of high standing, during the temporary absence of its permanent editor, Maulana Abdullah Al-Imadi, when Hazrat Mirza Sahib passed away. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote the following editorial on the deceased:

'That man, that very great man, whose pen was a magic wand and whose tongue was spell-binding; that man whose brain was a complex of wonders, whose eye could revive the dying and whose call aroused those in their graves, whose fingers held the wires of revolution [moral, spiritual and religious] and whose two fists were two powerful batteries; that man who for 30 years was for the religious world an earth-shaking quake, who, like the trumpet of the doomsday, awakened those lost in the slumber of this life, left this world empty-handed. This bitter death, this cup of poison, which entrusted the deceased to the dust, will remain on thousands, nay millions, of tongues, as the words of bitter disappointment and regret. The stroke of death which slaughtered, along with one who was very much alive, the hopes and longings of many, and the wails it raises of lament, will remain in memories for a long time to come.

'The passing away of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib Qadiani is not such an event that a lesson should not be learnt from it, nor should one be content with consigning it to the passage of time to efface. Such people who cause a revolution in the religious world, or the world of intellect, do not come into this world often. These sons of history in whom it rightly takes pride are very rarely seen on the world scene, and when they do come they demonstrate

to the world a revolution to remember. 'In spite of our serious differences with Mirza Sahib in respect of some of his claims and beliefs, his separation for ever has convinced the educated and enlightened Muslims that one of their very great personages has left them. And with him the mighty defense of Islam against its opponents, which was linked with his person, has come to an end. His peculiarity that he performed against the enemies of Islam the duty of a victorious general, compels us to express openly our feeling that the grand movement which for a long time defeated and trod over our enemies should be continued in the future also, and that too -if ill-fortune does not obstruct peace and good-fellowship [between Muslims]- with the compulsory partnership required by a joint duty, and in consonance with the blessed principles of Islamic consensus.

'Mirza Sahib appeared in the front line of lovers who for Islam accepted the dedication to sacrifice their time from the cradle, through the springs and autumns, to their graves in fulfilling the pledge of loyalty to their beautiful beloved (Islam). Sayyid Ahmad, Ghulam Ahmad, Rahmatullah, Ali Hassan, Wazir Khan and Abul Mansoor, these were men who were foremost and in front (in the service of Islam) and who took on its defense and were busy in that effort till the end

Mirza Sahib's literature which was produced by him in his confrontation with the Christians and the Arya Samajists has received the seal of general approval. And in this peculiarity, he stands in need of no introduction. We have to recognize the value and greatness of that literature from the bottom of our hearts, now that he has completed his task. That is because the time when Islam was surrounded and was under attack from all sides cannot be effaced from our minds nor forgotten. And the Muslims who were entrusted with the safety of Islam by the Real Saviour, in this world of material means and causes, were lying flat sobbing in the aftermath of their shortcomings. And they were doing nothing for Islam, or perhaps they could do nothing. On the one hand the attacks were so virulent that the whole of Christendom was bent on blowing out the light of Islam, which alone enlightened the true reality, as it [Christendom] found it to be an obstruction in the way [of its darkness]. And the powerful forces of wiliness

and wealth were behind the back of these attackers. On the other hand the weakness of the defense [of Islam] was such as if against the enemy's cannons they did not have even arrows. And counter-attack or defense did not exist whatsoever. Because, against reality and through the misfortunes of our evil deeds, the Muslims were held to be the moving spirit behind the riots of 1857, therefore in all Christian countries, particularly in England, there was a storm of political agitation against the Muslims. And the Christian missionaries exploited it no less than their ancestors who exhorted the Christians to fight the Crusades. Just about when their religious passions were about to cure their hereditary rancour of twelve to thirteen centuries by achieving its objective, the defense of Islam began, in which Mirza Sahib had a part. That defense not only shattered to pieces the initial influence which Christianity had because of its being under the protection and promotion of the Government. And thousands, nay, millions of Muslims were saved from this dangerous attack which deserved to succeed otherwise. Not only that, but the talisman of Christianity itself was blown away like smoke.

'So, this service rendered by Mirza Sahib will place the coming generations under a debt of gratitude, in that he by joining the front rank of those waging Jihad by the pen discharged their duty to defend Islam. And he has left as his memorial a literature which will last so long as the Muslims have blood running in their veins and the championship of Islam is visible as their national symbol.

'Apart from that, Mirza Sahib performed a very special service of Islam by crushing the poisonous fangs of the Arya Samaj The writings he produced highlight the claim that they cannot possibly be overlooked however much the defense of Islam may be enlarged in future.

'Natural ability, application and dexterity, and continuous debates [with the opponents of Islam] had lent Mirza Sahib a special splendour. He had vast knowledge, not only of his own religion, but also of other religions. And he used to make use of his vast knowledge with great finesse. His preaching and persuasion had acquired such ability that the person addressed, whatever his ability or his faith, was thrown into deep thought by his spontaneous reply It cannot be questioned that Mirza Sahib

had a special ability to make Islam prevail over all other religions It is not likely that a person of his status will be born in the religious world of Hindustan [now India and Pakistan] who would devote his highest talents like him to the study of religions.'

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who wrote the above tribute, was a master of Urdu, Persian and Arabic languages and an artist of Urdu diction. It has not therefore been easy to translate him, and we are conscious of the inadequacy of the above rendering.

The permanent editor of the paper Vakeel of Amritsar, Maulana Abdullah Al-Imadi, soon returned to his editorial chair and added his own tribute as follows on May 30, 1908:

> *'Although Mirza Sahib had not received systematic education in the current knowledge and theology, yet a close assessment of his person shows that he was born with a unique temperament which is not given to each and every person. By virtue of his study and upright nature, he had attained mastery over religious literature. In about 1877, when he was 35 or 36 years old, we find him charged with an unusual religious fervour. He leads a life of a true and pious Muslim. His mind is immune from the worldly temptations. He is as happy in solitude as if he were in congenial company. Even when he is in company, he is busy enjoying the pleasures of solitude. We find him restless. It appears as if he is searching for a lost thing, which has no trace in the mortal world. Islam with all its glories has so overwhelmed his person that sometimes he is holding debates with the Arya Samajists, sometimes he is writing voluminous books to highlight the truth of Islam. His debates in Hoshiarpur in 1886 were so delightful that one cannot forget their pleasant impact on one's mind. As a counterblast to other religions, he has written some unique books which expound the glories of Islam. Their perusal is so inspiring that their effect has not yet faded. His Baraheen Ahmadiyya overwhelmed the non Muslims and overjoyed the Muslims. He has given a captivating picture of religion As to his character, there is not a trace of any blot on it. He lived a pious life. He was God-fearing all his life. In short, his fifty years of moral integrity, clean habits and sterling services to religion, raised him to the enviable position of great prominence among the Indian Muslims' (Akhbar Vakeel, Amritsar, May 30, 1908).*

Ch. Afzal Haq, President, Jamiat-e-Ahrar, wrote:

'Before Arya Samaj came into being, Islam had almost been like a dead body. The Muslims had lost their sense of mission. Dayanand's endeavour to create suspicions against Islam alerted the Muslims for a while. But they soon fell into deep slumber. Among the Muslims no organization came into existence for the propagation of Islam. But there was one soul which was restless at the indifference of the Muslims. He got round him a small Jamaat and went ahead to preach Islam. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad instilled in his Jamaat an unrelaxing zeal for the propagation of Islam. This was a noble example not only for the Muslims of various sects but also an inspiration for the missionary organizations and Jamaats in the entire Muslim world, (Fitna-i-Irtidad aur Siyas Qalabazian, p. 46).

The daily Zamindar (editor, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan) wrote:

'Mirza Sahib faced the Hindu and the Christian religions very ably. His books entitled Surma Chashma-e-Arya and Chashma Masihi, etc., are very good books against the Arya Samajists and the Christians, (Zamindar, September 12, 1923).

Maulvi Noor Muhammad Sahib, Qadri Naqshbandi Chishti, wrote:

'Then Maulvi Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani stood up and challenged the churchmen and their community and said, "Christ, by whose name you swear, died like all human beings, and I am the Jesus whose advent is predicted." By this method, he made things so hot for the Nazarenes that they were hard put to make good their escape. By this very method, he put to rout the Padres both in India and England' (Preface to the commentary on the Holy Qur'an by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, p. 30, 1934 edition).

The editor of the monthly magazine Nigar wrote:

'Mirza Sahib was a passionate lover of Rasool (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and a sincere man of action. I found him a believer in the Finality of Prophethood and a lover of the Holy Prophet in the true sense of the word. I also studied his life and works and found him a man of action, courage and determination. He discerned the true significance of religion

and presented Islam in the manner which is reminiscent of the times of the Holy Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the pious Caliphs' (Nigar, November 1961).

Shamsul Ulema Maulana Sayyid Mir Hassan Sahib, who was the teacher of Allama Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, wrote:

'Hazrat Mirza Sahib came to Sialkot in 1864 during his service. He lived there. As he was a pious man, he was averse to trivial and nonsensical talk. He lived in aloofness. He did not relish meeting people as it was a sheer waste of time' (Hayat-i-Tayyebah, p . 29, compiled by Sheikh Abdul Qadir).

The same scholar said on another occasion:

'It is a pity that we did not appreciate him [Mirza Ghulam Ahmad]. I cannot describe his spiritual excellences. His life was not like the life of ordinary people but he was one of those who are special servants of Allah and come into this world only occasionally' (Al-Hakam, dated 7th April, 1934).

Doctor Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Ph.D., Barrister-at-Law, philosopher and poet of international repute, said while the Promised Messiah was still alive:

'Amongst the present Muslims of the sub-continent [now India and Pakistan] Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani is the greatest religious thinker' (magazine Indian Antiquary of September 1900).

Shamsul Ulema Maulana Sayyid Mumtaz Ali, editor of Tehzib-e-Niswan, Lahore, wrote:

'The late Mirza Sahib was a very saintly and exalted personage. And he had such spiritual power born of virtue that it could enslave the most hard-hearted persons. He was a very knowledgeable scholar, a reformer of high resolve and an exemplar of the purest life. Although we did not believe in him as the Promised Messiah, his guidance and leadership in fact performed the Messianic revival of those spiritually dead.'

Allama Niaz Fatehpuri wrote on three occasions as follows:

'Whatever I have studied so far about the Founder of Ahmadiyyat, and not only I but whoever studies the circumstances of his life and his character with sincerity and in search of the truth, he

will have to admit that he [the Founder of Ahmadiyyat] was a lover of the Prophet in the correct sense, in that he had a very sincere concern and anxiety for Islam.'

'I can say without affectation that he [the Founder] was a man of unusual resolve and constancy and a man of prescience and perception.'

'Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib defended Islam well, and he did so at a time when the greatest of the Ulema could not dare to face the enemies of Islam.'

(The Nigar, Lucknow, July 1960, November 1955 and October 1 960.)

Hazrat Khwaja Ghulam Farid Sahib

This venerable saint was the Pir of Chachran Shareef (now in the Punjab). He said:

'Mirza Sahib is a good and virtuous person. He sent me a book containing the revelations received by him. That book alone shows his spiritual excellence. He is a true person in his claims. He is not a forger or a liar' (book Isharat-e-Faridi, Vol. 3, p. 42).

'Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib Qadiani is on truth. In his affair he is truthful and correct. Day and night he is engrossed in the service of Allah. And for the progress of Islam and raising aloft the matter of religion, he strives with his life. I see nothing wrong or undesirable in him. If he has claimed to be Mahdi and 'Isa (Messiah) even that is something permissible' (Isharat-e-Faridi, Vol. 3, p. 79).

'Mirza Sahib spends all his time in the service of Allah, prayer and recitation of the Holy Qur'an and similar other preoccupations. He is so resolved to champion Islam that he has invited Queen Victoria of England to accept Islam. Similarly he has invited the Kings of France, Russia, and other countries to accept Islam. All his efforts are for the purpose that the creed of Trinity and the Cross, or total disbelief or godlessness, should be finished off, and in their place the Unity of God should be established on earth. Look at the Ulema of the time that, leaving alone all false creeds, they have attacked this good man who is

a complete follower of the Prophet of Allah, and he is on the right path and shows guidance to others. Such a venerable man who is perfect in all respects has been condemned as kafir [heretic] although if you see his writings they show that they are beyond the capacity of a human being. And all that he says is totally full of inner knowledge and truths, and it is wholly the path of true guidance. And he is not a disbeliever in the faith of the Ahle Sunnat wal Jamaat and the requirements of the religion of Muhammad' (Isharat-e-Faridi, Vol. 3' p. 66).

Maulvi Sirajuddin Sahib

He was the father of Maulvi Zafar Ali Khan, editor of the daily Zamindar of Lahore. He wrote:

'I can say from personal observation that Mirza Sahib was even in his youth a very virtuous, God-fearing and a venerable person He was free from pretense or forgery in matters of religion Personally we did not have the honour of believing in his claims or revelations but we consider him to be a perfect Muslim' (The Zamindar, dated 8 June 1908).

Further Tributes

Maulvi Sayyid Waheedudin, editor Aligarh Institute Gazette, wrote:

'The deceased [Mirza Sahib] wielded the sword of Islam very well against Christianity, Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj There is no doubt that he was a great warrior of Islam' (Aligarh Institute Gazette, June 1908).

Maulvi Bashiruddin, editor Sadiqul Akhbar, Rewari (UP India), wrote:

'Because Mirza Sahib had with his forceful speeches and magnificent writings silenced the enemies of Islam for ever, after giving telling replies to all criticisms, and had proved that truth is after all the truth, and because Mirza Sahib had in fact left no stone unturned in the service of Islam and had fulfilled all the requirements of the championship of Islam, justice requires that one should condole the sudden and untimely death of such a firmly resolved defender of Islam and the helper of Islam, and an eminent and irreplaceable scholar' (Sadiqul Akhbar, May 1908).

Mirza Hairat Dehlavi, editor The Curzorz Gazette, Delhi, wrote:

'The services of the deceased which he rendered to Islam in confrontation with the Christians and the Arya Samajists deserve the highest praise. He completely changed the tone of debate. And he laid the foundation of a new literature in the sub-continent [now India and Pakistan]. Not only as a Muslim but also as a seeker after truth, we admit that the biggest Christian missionary could not dare to open his mouth against the Mirza Sahib. Although he was a Punjabi, but his pen was so powerful that today in the whole of Hind [now India and Pakistan], nobody could write so forcefully. There was a vast store of words, full of emotion and force, in his head. And when he sat down to write, there was such a flow of choice, chaste words that it is impossible to describe it Although there is in places a tinge of the Punjabi dialect in his Urdu, even so his forceful literature is completely unique in its magnificence. And in reality some of his writings make one go into ecstasy. Among his followers there are not only common people but also very able graduates and M.A.'s, and very scholarly Ulema too. Is it not enough matter for pride that among his disciples there are scholars of both the traditional and modern kinds? He predicted the destruction of his enemies, and in the teeth of opposition and the fire of criticisms he cleared his passage and reached the zenith of progress. On every claim he made, there were exclamations of "We believe, and we attest its truth" from his disciples. And every person can draw the conclusion from these acclamations what success he achieved in his lifetime' (Curzon Gazette, June 1, 1908).

Pir Mehr Ali Shah of Golra Sharif Punjab:

'Imam Jalal-ud-Din Sayuti (may peace be on him) says that there are certain stages of spiritual progress where many servants of Allah become the Messiah and Mahdi. I cannot say whether he [Hazrat Mirza Sahib] is only at that stage or whether he is the same Mahdi promised for this Ummat [Muslim nation] by the Holy Prophet, but he [Mirza Sahib] is proving to be a cutting sword against false religions and is certainly Divinely aided' (Al-Hakam, dated June 24' 1904, p. 5).

Lastly, let us quote an eminent Christian, the British editor of the famous Pioneer of Allahabad, which was held in high esteem:

'If one of the Israelite prophets of the past could come down from heaven to preach, then in the circumstances of the twentieth century he would be as misfit as was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib of Qadian who died recently in his native Punjab [a study of him] would have thrown a new light on the prophets of Beni Israel. But our narrow and limited horizons of thought prevent such a comparison because our religious literature is enclosed within a narrow circle.

Even this cynical Christian writer could see the resemblance between the Promised Messiah and the prophets of Israel!

HISTORIC TRIALS

The analysis imparts a unique value to Noorani's work in terms of historical merit and contemporary relevance. This imprint has found expression in his regular columns in the print media and series of books that have come out over the past many years.

Indian Political Trials 1775-1947 is faithful to this diligence. Even a cursory browser of this study can pick out the massive archival exploration that has gone into its making. The exceptional understanding of judicial systems, approaches and history that Noorani possesses as a jurist is another evident component of the book. This aspect of the book, in many ways, also becomes a sort of record of the emergence and growth of the Indian Bar, and the ways in which it was bred by jurists belonging to both British and Indian origins.

The volume is structured more or less chronologically, opening with the trial and "judicial murder" of Maharaja Nanda Kumar of 1775. It is followed by the examination of other notable trials such as the ones against Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor, in 1858, the Great Wahabi case of 1943 and the cases against Bal Gangadhar Tilak for sedition in 1897, 1908, and 1916. The case against Aurobindo Ghose for inciting revolution in 1908, the joint trial of the Sankaracharya of the Sharda Peeth and the Ali Brothers at Karachi on charges of conspiracy in 1921, Maulana

Azad's trial on a charge of sedition in the same year, the case against Mahatma Gandhi in 1922 on a similar charge, the Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1930, the Indian National Army (INA) trial of 1945 and the trial against Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah in 1946 form the other components of the book. The developments in each of these trials are methodically recorded and the book brings to life the judicial issues involved in each of them, the unique ways in which lawyers of the prosecution and the defence took their arguments forward and the approaches employed

The exposition of the first trial in the volume brings out the political objective that the Warren Hastings-led British administration had in disposing of Maharaja Nanda Kumar from the face of the earth. The record of the trial of Bahadur Shah Zafar shows clearly how the proceedings of the case were manipulated to bring disrepute to a political foe, and the elucidation of the Meerut Conspiracy Case highlights how leaders of the nascent Communist Party of India were persecuted for holding political beliefs different from the ones accepted by the authorities.

The depiction of the case against Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the proceedings therein are distinguished by reference to its many political dimensions. Primarily, it exposes, using Azad's arguments, how judicial systems were controlled in order to perpetuate the interests of the ruling classes. But at another level it brings to light how Azad expounded a theology of liberation, in the context of India's independence struggle.

The portrayal of the INA trial brings out the ideological contradictions within the Indian freedom movement and the underlying unity within the advocates of differing perceptions. Noorani has done a great service by recording the various political contradictions and accords of the times in this form. The spirited legal defence of Subhas Chandra Bose by Jawaharlal Nehru even while expressing his political differences with Bose is one of the documentations available in this chapter.

The trial of the sedition cases against Tilak brings out some of the great defences put forward by C.R. Das and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. The reproduced text of Jinnah's performance in the court is particularly interesting in the context of the recent debates on Jinnah's political personality. Whatever the final verdict on the

founder of Pakistan, this record highlights Jinnah's great legal skills and his commitment to the cause of India's freedom. The Wahabi case draws attention to the use of a habeas corpus petition to curb the state's power to imprison any person arbitrarily without trial.

The discussions on all the chapters underline a unique British dilemma, particularly with regard to its proclamations on and practice of democracy. Noorani points out that a repressive judicial system was antithetical to the constitutional history of the imperial country because it involved a struggle for democracy against the prerogatives of the British Crown and an assertion of parliamentary privileges coupled with the establishment of rule of the law.

However, the depiction of various trials in the volume indicate that the British tried to solve this dilemma practically, by paying lip-service to liberal principles while their actions were guided overwhelmingly by self-interest. Although Noorani cautions that "judgment on the record of British justice in India must await a full study", particularly because the Raj began with farcical trials (such as the ones of Nanda Kumar and Bahadur Shah Zafar) and proceeded to fair ones like that of Aurobindo Ghose and the INA leaders.

Still, there can be little doubt as to what Indian Political Trials wants to convey about the Raj's judiciary - it was subjugated by the political system. Noorani points out that "enough is known of the record to suggest that while inconvenience was tolerable (to the Raj), outright challenge was not" and "when its prestige was at stake, the British Raj had no qualms about cutting corners and even perpetrating frauds".

In keeping with the Noorani imprint, Indian Political Trials converts this methodical documentation of political and legal contexts of the past to striking discussions on issues of contemporary relevance. In a kind of nuanced fast-forward, the analysis points towards the plotting and intrigues that have become part and parcel of some of the political trials of recent times, including the one that is going on against deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, under the auspices of the occupying United States administration.

In a significant analytical paragraph that juxtaposes past records of judicial infamy with the recent ones, Noorani points out that "political trials are staged to signify the establishment of a new order by usurpers of power in order to establish their legitimacy". He adds: "Nanda Kumar and Bahadur Shah Zafar had to be eliminated by the British. Zia-ul-Haq felt he had no option but to put Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on trial - and eliminate him. The pattern was an ancient one, set long before Charles I and Louis XVI were put on trial."

Noorani emphasises the point by quoting Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: "History bears witness that whenever the ruling powers took up arms against truth and justice, the court rooms served as the most convenient and plausible weapons... For a tyrannical and repressive government, there is no better weapon for wreaking vengeance and perpetrating injustice. Next to battlefields, it is in the courtrooms that some of the greatest acts of injustice in the history of the world have taken place... In that list we find a holy personage like Jesus Christ, who was made to stand with thieves before a strange court of his times. We find in it Socrates, who was sentenced to drink a cup of poison for no other reason than that he was the most truthful person in his country."

As one goes through the volume, it is clear that Noorani has been faithful to the premise he had set out for Indian Political Trials. The book should certainly become part of the reference kit of students and practitioners of law, politics and social science. But at the same time it should interest the general reader on account of the countless anecdotes and personality portraits of political and legal luminaries.

But this accomplishment must also pass on another (one is almost tempted to qualify it historical) responsibility to Noorani. The pursuit of his larger societal theme coalescing politics, law, justice and statecraft cannot stop with the birth of India. If anything, the practice of democracy and execution of justice by the judiciary in independent India have raised several problematic questions from time to time. Noorani's own columns in the print media have, time and again, highlighted these issues. Taking all this into consideration, readers are certainly entitled to demand from Noorani sequels to Indian Political Trails 1775-1947.

Though he remains an icon of secular nationalism in modern-day India, Azad was actually born in Mecca in 1888 and lived there till he was about seven. His father Khairuddin, a scholar-sufi originally from Calcutta, was persuaded by his Calcuttan disciples to return back to that city. Azad secretly cultivated a taste for Urdu books and Persian poetry and even learnt to play the sitar. Around this time he also experienced a revulsion against the pir-worship of his father's disciples and a diminished desire to succeed his father as pir. During his later teenage years he seems to have come into close contact with the Hindu revolutionaries of Bengal. A combination of brief travel to the Middle East and his Arabic reading also exposed him more deeply to the reformist ideas of Sheikh Abduh of Egypt and the uncompromising nationalism and anti-imperialism of Mustafa Kamil. After this period of spiritual homelessness, Azad, by the end of 1909, had an emotional/mystical experience that renewed his faith in religion and galvanised his personality in a dramatic way. Following this 'conversion,' Azad's career really began to take-off in 1912 with the appearance of his Urdu journal Al-Hilal. Though the journal was ambiguous about specific methods of cooperation and post-Independence political arrangements, Hindu-Muslim unity was a sentiment he had been partial to from very early on in his life. This is evident in his poignant 1910 essay on the broad-minded Sufi saint Sarmad. .

When World War I broke out in Europe, the British government, viewing the journal as seditious, expelled Azad from Bengal and placed him under internment in Ranchi for three and a half years. A few weeks after his release, he met Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi for the first time. Azad came to realize that in politics he could only be guided by the general principles of his religion and his knowledge of Indian Muslim history, rather than through invoking specific textual injunctions. Azad was imprisoned twice in a row during this period, and then released in 1936 along with the other Congress leaders. It was during these periods of imprisonment that the Maulana was able to complete the first edition of his famous Tarjuman al-Quran, his Urdu translation and commentary on the Quran. A second expanded edition was published during the 1940s. This incomplete translation and commentary would end up being his most definitive, though

controversial, theological statement on how Indian Muslims could live out their religion in a religiously pluralist and politically secular environment.

Following the passing away of M.A. Ansari in 1936, Azad became the most prominent Muslim in the Congress. By 1939 he was elected President of the party, though he was not the first Muslim to occupy that position. Azad's presidential address at the Ramgarh session of the Congress in 1940 occurred just a few days before Jinnah's historic Pakistan Resolution, and, in addition to articulating the point of view of the nationalist Muslims, became a classic statement on Indian secularism and a refutation of the two-nations theory.

Azad was imprisoned for a fifth time in 1940, following a limited campaign of civil disobedience, and released a year later. By 1942, and following the more comprehensive Quit India Movement, he, along with the other Congress leaders, was imprisoned again. Upon his release in 1946, Azad remained Congress President throughout the War years.

The Maulana reluctantly relinquished the Congress presidency in 1946, hoping that this would open an avenue between the Congress and the League; the latter party had refused to acknowledge a Muslim presence within the former one. He kept out of the coalition government formed that year, but in 1947, at Gandhi's urging, he became Minister of Education.

Following Independence, he would hold the post of Minister of Education for ten years. His last years were marked by sadness and loneliness, a consequence of a life lived so individualistically. Abul Kalam Azad died in 1958 of a stroke and was buried in a dignified corner in Old Delhi near the Jama Masjid. It is a great irony that, while possessing a thorough Islamic training, Azad ended up espousing a secular nationalism informed by personal religious sensibilities, while his opponent Jinnah, a modernist with a minimal religious upbringing, ended up vying for a separate Muslim state informed by purely political considerations.

A century has passed since British rulers in India like Curzon and Minto became self-styled interlocutors between Muslims and Hindus of the subcontinent. Up through the 19th century there had been no significant national political conversation between India's main communities. The "Chief Translator" of the High Court in Calcutta was highly prized for his knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian and English because at least three different sets of laws governed different people in the country. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote of his experience in the Bankim-inspired revolutionary societies of Bengal who treated him with extreme suspicion because they could hardly believe a Muslim wanted to join them as an anti-British rebel.

JINNAH VS AZAD

Then came MA Jinnah, Iqbal, Rahmat Ali and others, initial creators of Pakistan whether through greater or lesser motives. Azad, Zakir Hussain, Sheikh Abdullah and other Muslims were equally firm the Pakistan idea was not only bad for India in the world it was bad for Muslims in particular.

The Azads condemned the Jinnahs as greedy megalomaniacs, the Jinnahs condemned the Azads as minions of the Hindus. Larke lenge Pakistan, marke lenge Pakistan, khoon se lenge Pakistan, dena hoga Pakistan was the mob-cry during the bloody Partition, while the British, weakened by war and economics and bereft of their imperial pretensions, made haste to leave "this beastly country" to its fate ~ rather hoping the bloodshed would be such someone might hire them to stay on.

Certainly, having used the Indian Army for imperial purposes in the War, Britain (represented locally by a series of smartly dressed blundering fools) behaved irresponsibly in not properly demobilizing that Army during a period of intense communal tension.

There were no senior Indian officers ~ KM Cariappa became a Brigadier only in 1946, Ayub Khan was a Colonel under him. Then there were the fatuous "princes" the British had propped up in "Indian India", few being more than cardboard creatures. Among them was J&K's ruler who was a member of Churchill's War Cabinet and had come to harbour illusions of international grandeur. Once J&K's Muslim soldiers returned to their Mirpuri homes, Jammu and Punjab were in communal conflict, months before the decision that Pakistan would indeed be created out of

designated areas of British India just before British India extinguished itself. Army-issued Bren guns came to be used by former soldiers in communal massacres of the convoys of refugees going in each direction.

Part of the problem over J&K since then has been that it seems a dialogue of the deaf. Pakistanis since Zafrullah Khan claimed it was communal violence against Muslims in Jammu and Punjab that prompted the Pashtun invasion of Srinagar Valley beginning 22 October 1947; Indians have always claimed the new (and partly British-officered) Pakistan Army organized and instigated the invasion, coinciding with the planned takeover of Gilgit.

As in all complex moral problems, there was truth on all sides though no one doubts the invasion was savage and that the Pashtuns carried off Kashmiri women, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. J&K descended into civil war, Abdullah's secularists backed by the new India, Ibrahim's communalists by the new Pakistan. Field Marshall Auchinlek, who commanded both Indian and Pakistani armies, had the decency to resign when he realized his forces were at war with one another.

That J&K could not be independent in international law was sealed when the 15 October 1947 telegram sent by Hari Singh's regime went unanswered by Attlee. The tribal invasion from Pakistan caused the old State of J&K to become an ownerless entity in international law, whose territories were then carved up by force by the two new British Dominions (later republics) and the result has been the "LOC".

ZA Bhutto was perhaps Pakistan's only politician after that time. The years between the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan and the rise of Bhutto saw Pakistan's military begin its liaison with the Americans ~ from the US Ambassador's daughter marrying the Pakistan President's son to the leasing of Peshawar's airfields for U-2 flights over the USSR.

Yet Bhutto's deep flaws also contributed to the loss of Bangladesh and to brutality, supported by the Shah of Iran's American helicopters, against the Baloch.

Bhutto's daughter now may have succeeded in death where she could not in life. Like Indira Gandhi, there seemed a shrill almost self-sacrificial air about Benazir in her last days, and, like Indira, her assassination caused all her countrymen including her enemies to undergo an existential experience. Perhaps the public death of a woman in public life touches some chivalrous chord in everyone.

AZADS VIEW ON QURAN

In an article titled "Study The Koran?", Mr. Daniel Pipes, a historian and director of the Middle East Forum, states that to understand the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism one should not read the Quran. "Instead of the Koran," Mr. Pipes urges "anyone wanting to study militant Islam and the violence it inspires to understand such phenomena as the Wahhabi movement, the Khomeini revolution, and Al-Qaeda." He adds, "Muslim history, not Islamic theology, explains how we got here and hints at what might come next."

To reject the claim that the Quran is responsible for the rise of Islamic terrorism Mr. Pipes asks: "If the Koran causes terrorism, then how does one explain the 1960s, when militant Islamic violence barely existed? The Koran was the same text then as now."

He also goes on to remind his readers "Muslims have read the Koran differently over time. The admonishment for female modesty meant one thing to Egyptian feminists in the 1920s and another to their descendants today. Then, head coverings represented oppression and exclusion from public life. Today, in the words of a British newspaper headline, 'Veiled is beautiful.' Then, the head-covering signaled a woman not being a full human being; now, in the words of an editor at a fashion magazine, head-covering "tells you, you're a woman. … 'You have to be treated as an independent mind.' Reading the Koran in isolation misses this unpredictable evolution."

With all the respect that I have for Mr. Pipes I beg to disagree with him on this issue. It is true that forty years ago Militant Islam was not very common. The reason is that at that time Muslims were not very religious. A person can be a Muslim by name but not practice it. During the sixties, most Muslims were Muslims by name. Few went to the mosques. They were more interested

in modernization. Wearing veil was deemed as backward thinking. The youth were interested in western culture and as unbelievable as it may sound today the same women who later wore the chador and shouted after Khomeini, death to America, used to wear mini skirts just a few years earlier, listened to the beats of the Beatles and rocked and rolled with Elvis.

This liberation did not happen by reinterpreting the Quran. It happened because prior to that, during the twenties, Muslim world gave birth to men such as Atta Turk and Reza Shah who banned the veil, jailed the trouble making and hardliner Mullahs and forced secularization on their respective countries, (Turkey and Iran) challenging and undermining the nefarious influence of Islam in all spheres of the society and at all cost.

Great thinkers emerged that openly challenged the Sharia and blew new breath of secularism and modernism into the ailing body of the Ummah (Muslims). Sheikh Ali Abdul Raziq, an Egyptian scholar confined Islam to spiritual functions and tried to free mundane matters from strict religious or priestly hold. Dr. Taha Hussain, a leading Egyptian scholar, rejected the theory that the political system of early Islam was prescribed by God through His revelation to the Prophet.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a prominent Indian scholar, argued that the Quran did not demand of the follower of any religion that he should accept some new religion. It demanded of every single religious group that it should stick to the real teachings of its religion, shorn of all perversions and interpolations.

Asaf Ali Fyzee, an Indian Moslem thinker, agreed with Abul Kalam Azad that the object of religion was service of humanity and that a static law was unsuitable to a progressive society. In Iran the scholar Ahmad Kasravi denounced Islam and called it the main cause of ignorance and backwardness of the people. He called for modernizing of the country through secularization.

At the same time Ali Dashti published his book on the prophetic career of Muhammad revealing the fact the he was not a prophet but an ordinary man with little or no virtues and knowledge worthy to be followed. A few decades before them, the Iranian Mirza Agha Khan Kermani openly stated that Islam was good for

"barefooted desert-dwelling camel-herding lizard-eating bloodthirsty savages of Arabia and not for people who were the architects of great civilizations such as the Iranians."

If in the early half of the twentieth century the militant Islam was almost non-existent, it was not because Islam was interpreted such as to become tolerant and progressive. It was because Islam was attacked and undermined. During those days Muslims prospered and Islamic countries modernized because Islam was not taken into equation.

I agree that one has to read the history to understand the Islamic violence. However I can't agree with Mr. Pipes when he says that only "Muslim history, not Islamic theology, explains how we got here."

The Islamic violence is a direct result of the Islamic theology. It is naïve to believe the Wahhabi movement, the Khomeini revolution, and Al-Qaeda have nothing to do with the hatemongering teachings of the Quran. History, also includes the history of Muhammad and his terrorizing wars.

I agree with Mr. Pipes that the Quran is a confused book, that many verses are abrogated and one has to have a sound knowledge of sha'ne nozool (context) to understand that book.

However learned Muslims such as the Mullahs do have that knowledge and they know all the so called soft teachings of the Quran that were "revealed" when Muhammad was weak are abrogated. And the valid teachings are those that were "revealed" later, those that call for the murder of the disbelievers (9:123), not befriending with Jews and Christians (5:51), subduing them until they pay the Jizya (9:29), regarding them as najis (filthy, untouchable, impure) (9:28) and so on.

In brief, Quran is a violent book. The message of the Quran is a message of hate. This message is very clear and loud. It is inevitable that those who believe in the Quran and follow it be filled with hatred of those who do not believe in it. It is absurd to think that the hate inspiring teachings of the Quran have no relevance in the rise of the militant Islam. All one has to do is to listen to the sermons given in the mosques to see the kind of

hate that is being taught there and where is the source of that hate. Yes, study the Quran to see where militant Islam takes its lessons.

It is possible to veer Islamic world towards moderation again. This can happen ONLY if Islam is weakened. Quran need not be reinterpreted, it must be denounced, scrapped and rejected. Scholars and politicians in Islamic countries must join force and challenge the authority of the Quran, the infallibility of its author and the legitimacy of his claim.

They must secularize Islamic countries and stand strong against the Islamists. Islam must be attacked both on political and ideological grounds. It is insane that a billion people follow an insane man of the 7th century. It is insane that the rest of humanity go along with that. This insanity is bringing our world to the brink of destruction. Only when the belief in Islam is weakened, Muslims will turn towards moderation and modernization. With Islam and Sharia in the way, the only future awaiting Muslims is more bigotry, more poverty and more violence. And the only future awaiting the rest of mankind is more terror and more war.

9

Role of Azad on Communial Issue

No doubt Badruddin Tayebji was an exception to this rule who was modernist and also an advocate of the Congress politics and also became its first Muslim president. But generally the modernists among the Muslims provided cadre for the Muslim League. It is important to note that right from the beginning the Muslim League drew its support from educated upper classes of Muslims.

In the 20th century too the Jami'at al-Ulama - an organization of the orthodox theologians opposed the two nation theory and the Pakistan movement tooth and nail. Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani who defended the Shari`ah law and opposed any change in it condemned Jinnah's two nation theory and launched a movement against it. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, though not orthodox like Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani was also a prominent theologian of Islam and he too stood firm like a rock opposing the Pakistan movement.

Jinnah, on the other hand, was a modernist and advocated reforms in Shari'ah law and also moved various Bills to this effect was opposed to composite nationalism during the end of thirties and became not only champion but also the architect of Pakistan. Similarly Maulana Shibli Nomani, again an eminent Muslim theologian and a noted Islamic historian had condemned the formation of Muslim League in 1906 in an essay written by him in 1911. He had questioned in this essay the claimed representative character of the League.

Among the Hindus too it was the educated class and persons like the founder of the Benaras Hindu University Madan Mohan

Malviya who provided leadership to the Hindu right. Veer Savarkar who pronounced the theory of Hindutva and thought that Jinnah's separatism was justified was not a religious leader. Like Jinnah he also advocated modern reforms in the Hindu society.

This might appear baffling to many but it is not. The educated classes and modernists are directly involved in power struggle and on account of this that the modernists get involved in rightist or separatist or fundamentalist movements.

In contemporary India the leadership of BJP, VHP , Bajrang Dal and RSS (i.e. that of the Saffron family) is by no means provided by the orthodox Hindu priesthood. Some of the Shankracharyas who are the highest Hindu religious authorities are even strongly opposed to the VHP usurping the issue of Ramjanambhoomi which is essentially religious in character.

The Shankracharya of Dwarka and Jyotimath Swami Swarupanand who is very proud of his heritage as a Sanatan Hindu leader said in an interview to The Times of India that "finding a solution to the Ramjanambhoomi issue should be left to the Dharmacharyas of the two communities. It is a universal principle that if a man is ill he seeks a doctor for a cure. If there is a problem involving the religious sentiments of people then the religious leaders have to take the leadership in providing a remedy. Post independence India is a democratic polity where political leaders have to accept that there is a limit to their authority and power.....The divisions and the problems have been created by politicians interfering in religious matters. Orthodox Hinduism does not believe in disrespect for any religion. We believe that it is only through respect and sacrifice that a solution can be found to the Ramjanambhoomi issue." This statement is truly a religious and not a political statement.

Swami Swarupanand would very much like a temple to be built in Ayodhya which for him is the Ramjanambhoomi but not by launching aggressive political movement but through dialogue with the Muslims. Thus an orthodox Hindu leader who would not like to compromise on his religious belief would like to solve the problem in religious manner not by spreading extremism and violence.

The entire Ramjanambhoomi movement in the late eighties was launched by politicians for political purposes. It was the educated Muslim middle class which provided the support base for Jinnah's Pakistan movement in its own political interest. Similarly it was the educated Hindu middle class which provided the main support base for the BJP movement for Ramjanambhoomi to serve its own interests.

I would like to make it clear that I am not at all justifying religious orthodoxy in any way. I am myself involved in the reform movement in the Bohra Muslim community and have been advocating certain essential changes in the Muslim personal law which impinge upon Muslim women's rights. I am only trying to explain the social and political implications of religious orthodoxy on one hand, and, of modernist project on the other.

There is again very thin line between fundamentalism and communalism. These two terms have become almost synonymous in India. The Saffron family is being described both as communalists and fundamentalists. Similarly some Muslim leaders also are described both as communalists and fundamentalists simultaneously.

The important difference between fundamentalists and communalists is that while fundamentalists are also religiously orthodox, the communalists are not. The communalists are mainly modernists as already pointed out and not religiously orthodox. A careful academic or journalist should always bear these differences in mind while using these terms or categories and should not apply them loosely as is often done.

ALL THESE DEVELOPMENT HAPPENED DURING THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MOULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Language Policy During the Second World War

Sitaramayya (1947) draws a vivid picture of the situation - The Second World War drew Britain into it officially on the 1st September 1939. The British also drew India into it on the 3rd September 1939; the people of India were not consulted and were asked to fight a war with which they really did not have anything to do, except sympathizing with the plight of the nations that

stood for democracy. India was not consulted by Britain as the Dominions were. There were elected representatives in the Central Legislative Assembly and there were eleven provinces with elected representatives with Cabinets of their own. None of these had been consulted, but Britain ordered Indians to fight a war in which they had no interest, even though the nation at large sympathized with those powers that stood for democracy.

As Sitaramayya pointed out, the Congress Working committee met on September 14th, 1939 and felt that its own country had been the victim for over a century and a half of the negation and denial of that very democracy for which England affected to be fighting on the side of Poland. The Committee noted with regret that the participation of India in the war was taken for granted by the alien rulers. It characterized the situation as one in which the War was forced upon India, much against the wishes of the people.

Thus began an intense political phase in the history of the Indian National Congress.

THE GOAL - AVOID VIVISECTION OF THE COUNTRY

This intensive political phase focused its attention on the ways and means of achieving political freedom, with the integrity of the then India intact. This political phase did not have much to offer for an elaboration of the language policy of the Organization except for the reiteration of the previously declared policies of language and script as well as culture.

The political goal of the Congress was to avoid vivisection of the country and towards that extent it was willing to go with the All India Muslim League short of disintegration. The language policy declared thus far fully reflected this concern. This phase continues almost until the attainment of political freedom in August 1947, and even beyond because the scar left on the body politic of India by its vivisection could not be cured easily and instantaneously.

The inevitability, complexity and the blood bath of the vivisection, in fact, however, began to radically alter the thinking of men, both the lay public and the opinion leaders at the middle and lower rungs in the Indian National Congress and this had its

own impact on the formulation or subsequent modification in certain respects of language and culture policies, of which we will see in another article.

THE DOMINION STATUS

During this phase of intensive political activity immediately prior to independence, the elected Congress Ministries in eight provinces (Madras, Central Provinces, Bihar, U.P., Bombay, Orissa, and North Western Frontier Province) resigned in 1939. An example of the best "positive" position of the British, which was all the same detrimental of Indian Unity, could be found in Sir Samuel Hoare's speech in the Commons. He was an ex-Secretary of State for India. He declared, 'There are no two kinds of Dominion Status as some people seem to think. … Dominion Status is not a prize that is given to a deserving community but recognition of facts that actually exist. … If there are difficulties in the way, they are not of our making … It must be the aim of Indians themselves to remove these divisions just as it should be our aim to help Indians in their task. … We showed our good faith when we made the communal award … but in spite of our award, these divisions still exist and until they are removed, we have responsibilities to the minorities, that we cannot repudiate. … The princes are afraid of domination by British India, the Muslims are firmly opposed to the Hindu Majority of the Center. The Depressed classes and other minorities genuinely believe that responsible Government, meaning a Government, dependent on the Hindu majority, will and as long as they exist, it is impossible for Government to accept the demand for immediate and full responsibility at the center on a particular date.'

GANDHI - OUR DEMAND, COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE ONLY

On this Gandhi remarked, 'Has Dominion Status for India any meaning unless it is synonymous with Independence? Has the India of his imagination the right to secede from the Commonwealth? … If the British have shed imperialistic ambition, the proof for it should be forthcoming even before it is statutorily declared independent.' Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Indian National Congress in 1939, demanded, 'Let the British

Government throw on Indians the responsibility of producing an agreed constitution without any interference from outside and promise to give statutory effect to it. That will be a genuine offer. Without it all talk of protection to minorities looks like an excuse for perpetuating the status quo.'

THE PERCEPTION OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

The perception of the Muslim League was, however, different. The All India Muslim League's position was well illustrated in the amendment their legislators proposed for the Congress resolution in State Assemblies before the Congress Ministries tendered their resignation. The Muslim League Amendment stated:

This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to His Majesty's Government that they should, when considering the question of India's constitution, either during the duration of the War or after it is concluded, bear in mind that the democratic parliamentary system of Government under the present constitution has failed, being utterly unsuited to the condition and genius of the people and, therefore, apart from the Government of India Act of 1935, the entire problem of India's future constitution should be wholly reviewed and revised de novo and that the British Government should not make any commitment in principle or otherwise without the approval and consent of the All India Muslim League, which alone represents, and can speak, on behalf of the Mussalmans of India, as well as without the consent of all important minorities and interests.

THE VICEROY ON PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF THE MINORITIES

The Viceroy's statement of November 5, 1939 stated, 'During all the time I have been in India there is nothing I have been more anxious to secure than unity, and unity matters far more to India than is perhaps always realized. Unity, too, means that Indians, whatever their community or whatever their party allegiance, and whether they dwell in British India or in the Indian States, must work together in a common schemes… We are dealing with a problem that has defeated the united endeavors of the greatest

organizations in this country. There are grave differences of view which have to be taken into account which should be bridged. There are strong and deeply-rooted interests which are entitled to the fullest consideration and whose attitude is not a thing lightly to be brushed aside. There are minorities which are great in numbers as well as great in historic importance.

Gandhi commented,

The pronouncements hitherto made, whether here or in Great Britain, are after the old style, suspected and discredited by freedom-loving India. If imperialism is dead, there must be a clear break with the past-language suited to the new era has to be used. If the time has not yet come for the acceptance of this fundamental truth, I would urge that further effort at reaching a solution should be suspended.

Always language use reflected the inner thought, for Gandhi, and there was no exception to this basic principle even in politics for him!

THE PLEDGE

At the end of the year 1939, the political situation, thus, was tenser than ever, with the experiment of working in Legislative Assemblies having come to an abrupt end. At the end of 1939, the Working Committee decided to reframe the Independence Pledge for the year 1940, falling on January 26, to help in the preparation for a greater struggle of non-violence to attain independence.

The Working Committee called upon all Congress Committees and individual Congressmen to take the pledge prescribed below in public meetings called for the purpose. Where they could not attend a public meeting, the Congressmen were called upon to take the pledge in their homes, individually or in groups.

We believe that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government is India has not only deprived the

Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually.

We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

We recognize that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to Swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain Independence.

We pledge ourselves anew to the Independence of India and solemnly resolve to carry out non-violently the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained.

We believe that non-violent action in general and preparation for non-violent direct action in particular, require successful working of the Constructive Programme of Khadi, communal harmony and removal of untouchability. We shall seek every opportunity of spreading goodwill among fellowmen without distinction of caste or creed. We shall endeavor to raise from ignorance and poverty those who have been neglected and to advance in every way the interests of those who are considered to be backward and suppressed. We know that though we are out to destroy the imperialistic system we have no quarrel with Englishmen, whether officials or non-officials. We know that the distinction between the caste Hindus and Harijans must be abolished, and Hindus have to forget these distinctions in their daily conduct. Such distinctions are a bar to non-violent conduct. Though our religious faith may be different, in our mutual relations we will act as children of Mother India, bound by common nationality and common political and economic interest.

Charkha and Khadi are an integral part of our constructive Programme, for the resuscitation of the seven hundred thousand villages of India and for the removal of the grinding poverty of the masses. We shall, therefore, spin regularly, use for our personal requirements nothing but Khadi, and so far as possible, products of village handicrafts only and endeavor to make others do likewise.

We pledge ourselves to a disciplined observance of Congress principles and policies and to keep in readiness to respond to the call of the Congress, whenever it may come, for carrying on the struggle for the independence of India."

NO REFERENCE TO LANGUAGE IN THE PLEDGE

Note that this Pledge does not make any reference to language issue at all, unlike the mention of it in the other versions of Constructive Programme. Note also that the earlier Independence Pledge and other Pledges during Civil Disobedience movement, etc., did not contain any clause on Hindustani, even though the Constructive Programme was emphasized; the pledge sought to be administered in 1940 also did not contain that. The pledge was sought to be administered as part of preparation for a greater struggle for independence did not contain any mention of the learning of the lingua franca or of the National Education of which, now at 1940, the learning of the lingua franca, and primary school education through mother-tongue became an integral part.

In other words, the Indian National Congress being an Organization also of pragmatic people, did not want to club with the pledge the likely controversial matters such as its language policy, which had just then come into serious trouble in the Tamil region of the Madras Presidency, which opposed introduction of Hindi in its schools. Pragmatics, and a realization or shift in favor of first attaining political freedom, and a desire to treat the language policy as not immediately contributing to the attainment of political freedom would have led the Working Committee to decide on the non-mentioning of any point regarding language learning, etc., in the pledge.

Although untouchability and communal harmony were matters primarily of the social plane, their impact on the political front and their use as a potent weapon for the division of the country were recognized and as such these two had to remain in the pledge. However, the retention of Khadi became more a symbol of Congress Organization; language did not have any such function to perform. The potential of the language to become a unifying force was highly desired, but already the potential of Hindi or Hindustani to bring in dissensions/divisions among the people

of India was demonstrated in the Madras presidency, and to some extent in Bengal. And hence the cautious approach - it was better not to mention language in the Pledge.

Note also that the Constructive Programme which was given a go-by in preference to radical economic policies of mass production, etc., bounced back to life as the most important tool for the political agitation envisaged.

The differences of opinion among the leaders as regards the role of Constructive Programme and nonviolent means were implicitly acknowledged when the Working Committee hoped that 'none who did not believe in the contents of the pledge would take it merely for the sake of form'.

CHARKHA IN RELATION TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

The Indian National Congress met in March 1940 at Ramgarh, Bihar. The session had something to offer toward an illustration and understanding of the language policy of the Organization for the entire country. The Congress asserted that it was opposed to the Dominion status or anything similar to it because linkage with British policies and economic policies was not acceptable to the nation. Self-determination through a Constituent Assembly provided the only solution, it declared. Communal harmony could be secured by immediate independence. The Congress further declared that the withdrawal of the Congress Ministries from the Provinces, was a preliminary step for a mighty Civil Disobedience under Gandhi's leadership at a time chosen by him.

Gandhi addressed the AICC at Ramgarh after the resolution authorizing him to lead a Civil Disobedience movement was passed. He accepted the responsibility and said

> *Our internal difficulty is that we have a large number of Congress members on our Register. People have joined us because they find the Congress has acquired power. Many people who did not join the Congress before have now joined it. They have harmed it because they have joined with selfish motives. In a democratic organization we cannot prevent such people from joining unless our organization is so strong that sheer weight of public opinion would compel them to remain out. That cannot happen so long as our contact with primary Congress members*

> *is only for voting purpose. There is no discipline in the Congress … You must fulfill the conditions set down in the Independence Pledge. You must allow me to tell you that if you do not fulfill those conditions it will not be possible for me to launch a struggle. You will have to find another General. You cannot compel me to lead you against my will. When you appoint me as your general, you must obey my command. There can be no argument about it. Because my own sanction is love, I argue with you, for love must be characterized by patience. I have heard friends criticizing the Charkha. I know you are all ready to go to jails but you must earn the right and pay the price for going to jails. You will not be going to jails, as criminals. This condition about Charkha and Khadi has been there since 1920. Our programme and policy have been the same all these days. You might have grown wiser in this matter since then, but I must tell you I have not. The more I think about non-violence, the greater virtues I find in it ... I do not read all that appears in the Urdu Press, but perhaps I get a lot of abuses there. I am not sorry for it. I still believe that without Hindu-Muslim settlement there can be no Swaraj. ... Let me therefore warn you that not those who shout 'Sathyagraha', 'Satyagraha', will do Satyagraha but those who will work for it. ... If, therefore, you do not believe in the charkha in the sense I believe in it, I implore you to leave me. The charkha is an outward symbol of truth and non-violence, and unless you have them in your hearts you will not take to the charkha either. … Correspondents tell me that though they have no faith in me or the Charkha, they ply the latter for the sake of discipline. I do not understand this language. Can a general fight on the strength of soldiers who, he knows, have no faith in him? The plain meaning of this language is that the correspondents believe in mass action but do not believe in the connection I see between it and the Charkha, etc., if the action is to be non-violent. They believe in my hold on the masses but they do not believe in the things which I believe have given me that hold. They merely want to exploit me and will grudgingly pay the price which my ignorance or obstinacy (according to them) demands. I do not call this discipline. True discipline gives enthusiastic obedience to instructions even though they do not satisfy reason (Sitaramayya 1947:173-177).*

Note that of all the points in the Constructive Programme, Charkha was now chosen to be the symbol of nation building, and national struggle. It was not as if other points were dropped as not essential or even as impractical but Charkha plying was chosen perhaps because it could be done more easily and at all places and times. Thus convenience of performance perhaps weighed more with Gandhi in this regard.

Language learning and propagation of a language are time-consuming steps. While language learning could be and is generally an individual act, propagation of language is a social act whereas charkha plying is decidedly individual, although it could lead to social uplift. But both involve several other factors of convenience/faculty for their adoption. Charkha is a tool for manual work, which Gandhi valued very highly. He had argued in favor of prescribing manual labor as well as literacy, a cognitive and cultural artifact, as criterion for franchise.

Language learning or language attainment is largely an individual act and is patently a cognitive effort that requires a deliberate culture support. Note also that ultimately the Congress in free India chose to ignore literacy as criterion for franchise rights.

BRITISH INTEREST IN LANGUAGE LOYALTIES TO DIVIDE AND RULE

Based on the resolution and authorization of the Working Committee, preparations were afoot for the launching of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1940 or 1941. The organizational and preparatory measures included circulating a questionnaire to gather information covering the steps taken to popularize Khadi, establish contacts with Harijans and minorities, and the efficiency in office work. The questionnaire solicited information on the reaction of Congress members as well as of the public to the preparations for Satyagraha, the cooperation of the subordinate committees as well as the local boards in this behalf, propaganda work carried on and training camps held in the provinces.

Note that this circular did not elicit information on activities relating to the propagation of the lingua franca, or information relating to mother tongue education, etc. This was yet another indication that policies regarding language use were not to be mixed with immediate performance of political agitations.

Sitaramayya (1947:245) answers our observation above indirectly by pointing out to the thinking of the Congressmen in general then:

The fact is that in India while social, religious and cultural rights are guaranteed to all minorities, the whole population is evolving and must be trained to evolve, common political programme in which the economic interest of the whole nation would constitute the basis of the conflicting issues that determine the division into competing parties.

Thus political programmes linked with economic interests were to be highlighted, which naturally, would not encourage a culture tool such as language to be used as dominant reason/aid for an agitation.

AMENDMENT TO THE 1935 ACT

In 1941, the British introduced an Amending Bill to amend the Government of India Act of 1935 so that the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly and Provincial Legislative Assemblies could be postponed. This was necessitated because of the failure of the 1935 Act. Britain was then simultaneously toying with the idea of framing a future Constitution for India. Mr. Amery, Secretary of state for India referred earlier in 1940 to 'the problem of finding an English Constitution which could reconcile Indian differences and preserve India united in essential. … (to remove the deadlock in India caused by) the instinctive developments along the lines which her peculiar history and local conditions have made successful in this country and the dominions, in the wholly different and far more complex conditions of India' He suggested as the key to the deadlock a further increase in the powers of the provinces, possibly re-arranged and regrouped, subject to a minimum control to secure some measures of unity in foreign, defensive and economic policy, and he also suggested functional representation and an executive on the American line (Sitaramayya 1947 : 250, 251).

Mr. H. V. Hodson, Reforms Commissioner, toured the country and sounded public opinion on composite cabinets, irremovable

executive, redistribution of provinces, not necessarily on a linguistic basis and federation or confederation as the case might be (Sitaramayya 1947 : 250).

JANAB MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH'S POSITION

Things were fast changing during the late thirties and early forties, with the declaration of Mr. M. A. Jinnah that creation of Pakistan as the homeland of Mussalmans of India was the non-negotiable goal of the All India Muslim League. The British, on their part, were in the process of trying out several ideas such as a federal set up, confederation, provincial autonomy, linguistic or minimally/maximally linguistic redistribution of the provinces. The British began to reveal their thinking that linguistic consideration could play some significant role in the then prevailing political confusion. Fortunately for the nation, events occurred so fast in quick succession that any formulation of and tampering with the linguistic loyalties toward achieving the political goals of the British could not take a firmer shape.

In general, for everyone in the political arena, the late thirties and early forties of the twentieth century happened to be a period of acute conflict between the Indian National Crongress and All India Muslim League, with issues such as those relating to language use, language loyalty, and language policy of the Government both at the Centre and the provinces receding to the background. This was also the fate met with by the other items on the Constructive Programme of the Indian National Congress. There were proposals and counter proposals for a Constitution meant for a United India, but the demand for Pakistan was also becoming more intense and insistent than ever.

LANGUAGE CONTENT OF THE SATYAGRAHA MOVEMENT, 1940-41

The Congress was left with no alternative except resorting to Satyagraha since the British were rather prevaricating on the issue of according complete Independence to India - the various alternatives suggested by them such as dominion status, federal set up with provincial autonomy, etc., were only in the nature of attempts to gain more time to indulge in causing further divisions

among the peoples of India, the Congress felt. So, the Satyagraha Movement began on the 17th October 1940. It was rather peaceful all through the nation. From time to time the progress of the movement was very carefully watched both by the Governments and the Indian National Congress. Acharya Kripalani, General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. issued on June 17th , 1941 following instructions for the guidance of Satyagrahis and Congress Committees after consultation with Gandhi:

1. A released Satyagrahi must seek to offer Satyagraha as soon as possible. If for any reason he is unable to do so he must apply through the President or Officer in charge of the P.C.C. for exemption from Mahatma Gandhi, and he should state the reasons for such exemption being granted.
2. From the date on which the name of a prospective Satyagrahi is forwarded to Mahatrma Gandhi for sanction, he is to suspend his private activities and devote himself wholly to working out one or more items of the following thirteen-fold items of the Constructive Programme:

   A. Hindu-Muslim or Communal Unity

   B. Removal of Untouchability

   C. Prohibition

   D. Khadi

   E. Other Village Industries

   F. Village Sanitation

   G. New or Basic Education

   H. Adult Education

   I. Uplift of Women

   J. Education in hygiene and health

   K. The Propagation of Rashtrabhasha

   L. Cultivating love of one's own language

   M. Working for economic equality
3. Every prospective Satyagrahi is expected to keep a diary in which he will enter the work done by him during the day this diary will be submitted to the P.C.C. concerned

at fortnightly intervals. Permission to offer Satyagraha shall be granted only to such workers who have proved their worth by their every-day work.

4. The new restrictions in passing lists of Satyagrahis are considered necessary in the interest of the struggle as it is likely to develop in future and will become progressively more arduous. New Satyagrahis that come in should, therefore, be such as that can stand the new test. Complaints have been received in the office of undue delay in passing names. Those who have given their names need not, however, feel impatient at the delay. They should devote the interval to carrying out the Constructive Programme. If any Satyagrahi who has enrolled himself on the original basis feels unable to accept the new terms he is free to withdraw his name and there will be no disgrace attached to any such withdrawal. He may continue to render whatever other services he can to the country. He remains Congressman as before.
5. Enrolled Satyagrahis cannot contest elections to the local bodies. Those who have put in their candidature for such elections before being enlisted as Satyagrahis, have either to withdraw from the election or from the election, or from offering Satyagraha. As Satyagrahis they cannot be in both the places.
6. No released Satyagrahi, who is a member of a Local Board, unless specially exempted by Mahatma Gandhi, can attend its meeting. If he does, his name will be expunged from the list of Satyagrahis.
7. Unarrested Satyagrahis who are touring in their districts and those whose names have been approved are not to attend meetings of local bodies.
8. During the monsoons, a Satyagrahi may, if necessary, establish himself in a village, not his own, or group of villages, and carry on Satyagraha and constructive activities.
9. Unarrested Satyagrahis who either touring in their districts or marching in the direction of Delhi, should send fortnightly reports of their work to the provincial office. The Provincial Congress Committee in turn will send a consolidated report of their work to the All India Congress Committee office at stated intervals, fortnightly or monthly.
10. Complaints have been received about the intemperance of language of certain Satyagrahis. Satyagrahis should know that vituperation and abuse are against both the spirit and letter of Satyagraha and must, therefore, be invariably avoided.

Note that the list of items under the Constructive Programme was now further expanded. Propagation of National Language and Cultivation of love for one's own language were included as part of the Constructive Programme, even as several other subjects such as adult education and work for sanitation and hygiene were made part of the Constructive Programme along with Khadi, prohibition and Hindu-Muslim Unity. Thus, the original complexion of the Constructive Programme was now changed into a broader basis. In fact, the Constructive Programme would now include any nation building rural activity.

The most interesting thing for us to note was the formal recognition that love for one's own language was recognized to be a Constructive Activity and not an activity aimed at disunity. The love for one's own language was clubbed with the interest in learning and propagation of Hindustani as the lingua franca. This provision was in the nature of according recognition to the growing assertion of major linguistic groups of their own identity even as the Congress had already recognized the linguistic rights of the minorities.

In October and November 1941, the Government of India started not arresting the Satyagrahis and those who were arrested and jailed earlier were being released in batches. Gandhi, while acknowledging in his statement dated the December 5, 1941 that 'the conduct of the campaign has been rendered difficult by the Govt. action in discharging Civil disobedience prisoners,' had strongly urged the pursuance of the Constructive Programme.

Prosecution of Constructive Programme means constructing structure of Swaraj. The whole theme of corporate non-violence,

as I have conceived it, falls to pieces if there is no living faith in the Constructive Programme. To my mind, Swaraj, based on non-violence is fulfillment of Constructive programme; hence, whether the authorities jail us or not we must pursue the Constructive programme.

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress which met at Wardha did not, however, explicitly state anything about the continuation of the Constructive programme as the means to attain Complete Independence. The resolution passed by it contained an appreciatin of Ghandhi's leadership and assured him 'that the policy of non-violence adopted under his guidance for the attainment of Swaraj, and which has proved so successful in leading to mass awakening and will be adhered to by the Congress. The Working Committee further assures him that it would like to extend its scope as far as possible even in a free India. The Committee hopes that Congressmen will tender him full assistance in the prosecution of his mission including the offering of Civil Disobedience.'

The Working Committee, instead of explicitly asking for the continuation of the Constructive Programme as a political strategy to attain Complete Independence, concluded that 'Congress can help and serve people in the difficult times ahead (war times) only if its organization is strong and disciplined and Congressmen individually and Congress Committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities. Congress Committees and Congressmen should, therefore, address themselves immediately to the task of strengthening organization and reviving and maintaining contacts with people in villages and towns. Every village should as far as possible, receive the message of Congress and be prepared to face such difficulties as might arise'.

Note that from an emphasis on the implementation of the Constructive Programme which included a strong component of Indian language use, we now reached a stage of Congressmen preparing themselves to face the war-situation, now knocking at Indian doors. Non-violence and consequent implementation of the Constructive Programme as demanded by Gandhi was agreed and sworn to, but the pragmatists within the Congress, who were also idealists in their own right, had carried the day with them.

This consequence should also be seen as a further step toward removing the language policy purely from a Constructive Programme base to a political base.

A TRUNCATED CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME IN THE PLEDGE OF 1942

On January 13, 1942, the Working Committee issued instructions to Congressmen on the celebration of the Independence Day on 26 January. The Committee amended the Independence Day Pledge by deleting from the pledge portions relating to the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement:

We believe that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people as of any other people to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have necessities of life so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but also has based itself on the exploitation of the masses and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

We recognize that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to Swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain independence.

We pledge ourselves anew to independence of India and solemnly resolve to carry out non-violently the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained.

We believe that non-violent action in general and preparation for non-violent direct action in particular require successful working of the Constructive Programme of Khadi, communal harmony and removal of untouchability. We shall seek every opportunity of spreading goodwill among fellowmen without distinction of caste or creed. We shall endeavour to raise from ignorance and poverty those who have been neglected and to

advance in every way the interests of those who are considered to be backward and suppressed. We know that though we are out to destroy imperialistic system, we have no quarrel with Englishmen whether officials or non-officials. We know that the distinction between caste Hindus and Harijans must be abolished and Hindus have to forget these distinctions in their daily conduct. Though our religious faith may be different, in our mutual relations we will act as children of mother India, bound by common nationality and common political economic interest.

Charkha and Khadi are integral parts of our Constructive Programme for the resuscitation of seven hundred thousand villages of India and for the removal of the grinding poverty of the masses. We shall, therefore, spin regularly and use for our personal requirements nothing but Khadi and so far as possible products of village handicrafts only and endeavor to make others do likewise. We pledge ourselves to the disciplined observance of Congress principles and policies and to keep in readiness to respond to the call of the Congress whenever it may come for carrying on the struggle for the independence of India.

Note that in this Pledge, Khadi becomes the symbol, perhaps as a sop to Gandhi's insistence on Charkha. Language did not find a place. In fact, the Constructive Programme was to be reviewed only as an elastic affair.

THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT AND THE LEAGUE

The Prime Minister of Great Britain made a statement in the House of Commons on March 11, 1942 which more or less reiterated Britain's earlier position only: 'The crisis in the affairs of India arising out of the Japanese advance has made us wish to rally all the forces of Indian life, to guard their land from the menace of the invader. In August 1940, a full statement was made about the aims and policy we are pursuing in India. This amounted in short to a promise that as soon as possible after the war, India should attain Dominion status in full freedom and equality with this country and other Dominions under a Constitution to be framed by Indians, by agreement among themselves and acceptable to the main elements in the Indian National life. This was, of course, subject to the fulfillment of our obligations for the protection of minorities, including the depressed classes, and of our treaty obligations to the Indian States, and to the settlement of lesser matter arising out of our long association with the fortunes of the Indian sub-continent.'

Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the War Cabinet, who was the Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons, was on a mission to work out the details and modalities, following the above announcement of the British Prime Minister. Sir Stafford Cripps' Proposal was published on the 30th April 1942. It contained proposals for the accord of Dominion Status to India; it gave also a right to secede from the Common wealth. It provided for a Constituent Assembly for India; however there was also a provision that could be exercised by any Province if it so decided which would enable it to secede from the Indian Union itself. The Princes were not only left free to join or not to join the Indian Union but were also given the sole right to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly. Also the Defence forces would continue to be commanded by the Viceroy. The proposals were rejected by all shades of opinions and parties in India:

The Congress rejected the Cripps offer in the main because there was no responsibility of the Executive to the legislature. The freedom of a province to cut out of the Union, the exclusion of the States' people from the picture and the virtual reservation of Defence and War, were doubtless additional material factors but they relatively occupied a secondary place. The Muslim League which was ready to accept if the Congress accepted, rejected the offer because the freedom of a province to cut out of the Union as embodied in the offer was neither clear not full to the point of conceding the segmentation of India as desired by it in the demand of Pakistan. The Hindu Mahasabha rejected the Officer because of the principle of dismemberment of Hindustan even in a rudimentary form. The Sikhs opposed it tooth and nail because their own community would be distributed over two Unions and they claimed the right to form autonomous unit themselves. To the Depressed Classes there were not, they said, adequate safeguards. The Indian Christians and the Labour leaders spoke in the tone and terms of the Congress. The Radical Democratic Party alone accepted the offer. The states would not have it because

whether they joined the Indian Union or not, the new situation would involve a revision of their Treaty Rights. The States people did not figure in the picture at all and therefore would not look at it (Sitaramayya 1947: 332).

Gandhi declared in April 1942 that 'whatever the consequences, therefore, to India, her real safety, and Britain's too, lies in the British orderly and timely withdrawal from India'. Even earlier he had demanded, 'Why do no British statesmen admit that it is after all a domestic quarrel? [Gandhi was referring to the differences between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.] Let them withdraw from India and I promise that the Congress and the League and all other parties will find it to their interest to come together.'

PLEADING FOR A COMPOSITE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Working Committee met in July 1942 at Wardha and made an earnest appeal to the British Government to accept the proposal to quit India. The A.I.C.C. met in Bombay on August 7 and 8, 1942 and repeated the demand for the withdrawal of the British Power from India.

It resolved that on the declaration of India's independence, a Provisional Government would be formed and Free India would become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The Provisional Government would be a composite government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. The Provisional Government would evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly to prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people.

This constitution, according to the Congress view, would be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the Federating Units, and with the residuary powers resting in these Units. The A.I.C.C. resolved also that since the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demanded a World Federation of free nations, it was no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavoring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevented it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of

humanity. The Committee resolved to start a mass struggle on non-violent lines to demand that the British quit Indian forthwith.

A ROMANTIC POSTURE OF THE CONGRESS

Several interesting points need to be noted here in comparison to the later position of the Congress. Later on, once it became clear that India will be partitioned, ideas as regards federal set up, which were agreed to by the Congress in order to avert the vivisection of India, changed dramatically. The concept of Nationhood and the constituents that were assumed to be forming part of a Nation changed dramatically, and Congressmen veered around to the position that the Central Government should have the residuary powers, once the partition of India was effected. However, in order to avoid the partition of India, the Indian National Congress than was willing to accept a Provisional Government at the Centre and a Constituent Assembly leading to a Federal India and a World Federation. (Note the romanticism/ idealism of the Congress leadership for one World Government.)

Note also that if, as envisaged at that time, constituting units would retain the residuary powers, the nation would have established a language policy of a different sort than the one we finally arrived at in our current Constitution of India. This was not to suggest, however, that the Congress would have given up its policy of Hindustani being the lingua franca at the Centre, but, all the same, at least one or two of the federating units such as the presidencies of Bengal and Madras might have put up a greater effort to include the use of their languages as well in the administration of the Centre, thus necessitating a change in the language policy of the Indian National Congress.

The resolution as passed by the AICC had added three elements to the original suggestion made by the Working Committee-(i) the primary functions of the Provisional Government were to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command (a compromise between the positions of Gandhiites and non-Gandhites in the Indian National Congress), (ii) the Federal set up with the largest measure of Autonomy for the Federating Units and with the residuary powers resting in these Units (a compromise suggested to the All India Muslim

League which had by then taken a strong position in favor of creating Pakistan as an independent country outside India), and (iii) the freedom of India should be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq, which must not be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial power (revealing the influence of emerging Congress leadership under Jawaharlal Nehru and Socialists who saw Indian freedom only in the perspective of freedom of all the nations). Thus the stage was set for the commencement of the Quit India Movement.

GUIDELINES TO THE NATION DURING THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

Ghandhi asked the country to follow all the thirteen points contained in the Constructive Programme and added that (i) the Press should discharge its obligation and duties freely and fearlessly; (ii) the Princes should rise to the occasion. They should read the signs of the times and part the responsibility of the administration to their subjects and inform the Political Department accordingly. (iii) Let the struggle be open. There should be no underground activity. (iv) The students and professors should imbibe the spirit of Freedom. They should stand by the Congress. Should the emergency arise, they should abandon their occupation and careers, and (v) there is no need for the Government servants immediately to resign but they should write to the Government to say that they were with the Congress.

Note that Gandhi, even in the heightened and charged atmosphere of the Second World War arriving in India and intense political agitation, was not prepared to give up the stress on the Constructive Programme.

THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME REVISITED

The Constructive Programme, as it stood then, had 13 items under it and two of these 13 items related directly to the selection of language and language use for culture, profession and education. Thus, for Gandhi, language always had an important role not only in non-political construction of the country but also in the intense political agitations against the British.

Language, in fact, had a role to play in most of the 13 items in the Constructive programme: in Hindu-Muslim or Communal Unity it was the development of Hindustani as the Rashtrabhasha which was held to be an essential item to preserve the culture and script of the Muslims; under New or Basic Education, mother tongue medium up to seven years of schooling was also guaranteed by the Indian National Congress; Adult Education was to be imparted in the mother tongue; Propagation of Hindustani was a direct policy on language use whereas emphasis on Cultivating Love of One's Own Language was a guarantee given to major linguistic groups as well as linguistic minorities. Propagation of all other items except perhaps the working for economic equality had something or the other to do with the use of Indian languages. Thus, in a way, both explicitly and implicitly, the Constructive Programme centering around the 13 items, had something to do with choice and use of Indian languages, at the time of the commencement of the Quit India Movement.

THE VICEROY THROWS A CHALLENGE - A PROPHETIC WORD!

Gandhi was arrested and this became the signal for the intensification of the Quit India Movement. In the midst of the event, the Viceroy spoke in December 1942, elucidating once again the British refrain of safe guarding the interests of the minorities in India. The speech, when now read with the hindsight of history, was, indeed, ominous, even as it had some lessons for the culture and language policy of free India.

> *I have spoken often to you in my earlier addresses of the importance of unity in this country. Geographically, India, for practical purposes, is one. I would judge it to be important as it ever was in the past, nay more important, that we should seek to conserve that unity in so far as it might be built up consistently with full justice for the rights and the legitimate claims of the minorities, whether those minorities be great or small. That would be a desirable aim no one gentleman can doubt who tests that pro-position in terms of foreign policy, of tariff policy, of defence policy, of industrial development. Can India speak with the Authority that she is entitled to claim, can she play her part effectively at international discussions, at discussions with the*

other parts of the Empire if she is to speak with two voices? Indian unity, subject as I have said to full and sufficient provision for the minorities, accepted as such by those minorities, is of great and real importance if India is to carry the weight, which she ought to carry in the counsels of the Empire and of the world. But these are hard practical issues that have got to be faced before any true solution can be found. Political opinion in all responsible quarters must discover a middle road along which all men of good will may march. That indeed is the difficult but essential task which must be performed if India is to achieve the great position we all desire for her. The policy of H. M.'s Government in respect of the future status of India is clear beyond any question. But the achievement of the particular status carries with it heavy obligations. In the modern world, whether we like it or not, a readiness to accept heavy financial burdens, to accept liability for defence on whatever scale one's geographical position demands, at whatever cost, all those are essential. So many today found their hopes and their plans on the confident assurance that the post-war world will be a safe world. I sincerely hope that it will be so. But if that end is to be achieved, and maintained, constant vigilance, constant effort, constant fore thought, will be needed. And all that is relevant to what I have just said about the unity of India. A divided people cannot carry the weight that it ought to carry or make its way in the world with the same confident expectation of success.

But equally, mere artificial unity, without genuine agreement between the component parts may well be a danger rather than an advantage. For fissures that reveal themselves under pressure from outside are more dangerous than fissures the existence of which is well-known and can be provided against. It is only by understanding between party and party, between community and community, understanding that begets trust and confidence, that is based on a liberal acceptance by the parties to it of the historic traditions, the legitimate claims of the other to a place in the scheme of things, that there comes that truly welded result which is able to stand shocks from whatever corner of the compass. Is not the result worth asking for? Is it not worth some sacrifice, if some sacrifice must be its price? (Lord Linlithgow, in his address on 17 December 1942 to the Federation of Chamber of Commerce)

Note that although at that time the Viceroy's speech was considered to be a homily characterized by an absence of coordination between word and deed, some of the desires/ perceptions of post-independence Indian leadership were fully reflected in it. Accommodation of minorities, both religious and linguistic, had become the hall mark of modern post independence India.

DEMAND FOR THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN

In its annual session held in Madras in 1941, the All India Muslim League demanded Pakistan, or a separate autonomous Union of Muslim majority provinces as an integral territory having nothing to do with the Indian Union beyond the obligations and rights as between two independent but neighborly countries. The Working Committee of the All India Muslilm League which met on August 22, 1942 expressed its willingness to negotiate with other parties for the formation of a provisional government - on a condition: the British should 'guarantee to the Muslim the right of self determination and assure them, without delay, that they would abide by the verdict of a plebiscite of the Muslims in favor of Pakistan.' It expressed its willingness to negotiate with any party for the setting up of a provisional government based only on the acceptance of their demand for a separate Pakistan.

A PROPOSAL FOR FIVE DOMINIONS, NOT TWO NATIONS - GEOGRAPHICAL CONTIGUITY NOT LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

When this struggle revolved around future constitutional set up, a proposal was adumbrated in Aligarh on August 25th 1942 by Sir Firoze Khan Noon, Defence member of the Central Executive Council, a Muslim Leaguer, to divide India into five dominions:

I should like British India to be divided into five dominions: (i) Bengal and Assam, (2) C.P., U.P., and Bihar, (3) Madras (Dravidian), (4) Bombay (Maharatha) and (5) Punjab, Baluchistan, Sind and North-West Frontier. These five dominions could be completely independent like New Zealand with her million and half men and Australia and South Africa with their seven or eight

million men each. But there are certain matters for which a central authority and a united effort on the part of all dominions is essential. These are, in my opinion, Defence, Customs, Foreign-relations and Currency. For the administration of these four subjects, only I would recommend the creation of a central authority which will consist of delegates who will hold office so long as the appointing authority held office in their respective dominions, but with this great reservation that if any time any dominion were dissatisfied with the working of the central authority that dominion shall have the power to secede, but that there shall also be a provision for such a seceding dominion to come back to the center when the points of differences were removed. If you tell a State that once you come into federation you will never be able to get out of it, the authorities of that State will do their utmost to keep out of that federation, but if you give this freedom of secession, you may induce them to come in and have a trial ...

Note that demands for Pakistan and demands for division of India into several units on one ground or the other were all made taking into consideration the geographic continuity, presumed culture unity, religious diversity and, in general, the presumed similarity in the ethos, but not based on language specificity. The Noon proposal presented above is a good example of the arguments in favor of the division of India based on perceived identity in culture ethos.

JINNAH'S PLEA

In February 1944, Mr. M. A. Jinnah once again reiterated his position and plea for immediate creation of Pakistan as a sovereign state based on religion:

If the British Government is sincere in its desire for peace in India it should now frame a new constitution dividing India into two sovereign nations Pakistan for Muslims, representing one quarter of the country, and Hindustan for Hindus, who would have three - quarters of All-India. ... I don't agree that India would be any safer under a forced unity. In fact she might be more vulnerable because Hindus and Muslims will never be reconciled with each other. Any agreement between Muslims and Hindus to work together as a single unit or even in a Federation is an

impossibility. ... there would be under the new Constitution a transitional period for settlement and adjustment during which time British authority, so far as armed forces and foreign affairs, would remain paramount: The length of the transitional period would depend on the speed with which the two peoples and Great Britain adjusted themselves to the new constitution' (Janab M. A. Jinnah in his interview to the News Chronicle, London, quoted in Sitaramahyya 1947).

LANGUAGE POLICY DURING THE INTENSIFIED CAMPAIGN FOR AND AGAINST THE DEMAND FOR PAKISTAN

Gandhi, who was arrested on the 9th August 1942, was released on the 6th May, 1944. The Congress said that it had no faith in Britain's capacity to defend India even as she could not defend Burma, Malaya and Singapore by herself and without the aid of the people of the country. To get such cooperation and aid from the people of India, Congress declared, the country should be made free immediately.

After release from prison, Gandhi gave an interview to the News Chronicle, London, in which he stated explicitly that he could do nothing without consulting the Congress Working Committee (which the Government of India did not agree to). He further said that he had no intention of offering Civil Disobedience, even as there was no intention of withdrawing the call for Quit India resolution of August 8, 1942. He would be satisfied at that moment in 1944 with a National Government in full control of Civil administration and that he would advise Congress participation in a National Government, if formed. Also after independence was assured, he would probably cease to function as adviser to the Congress.

Even in the midst of such intense political atmosphere, and during this interview, which, in fact, performed the function of revealing the mind of Gandhi in public for both the Indian people and the Government of India after his jail term for nearly two years, Gandhi swore by the Constructive Programme and he recounted the items of that programme. Such was Gandhi's commitment to the Constructive programme in which language played a crucial role. Gandhi used every opportunity to emphasize

that the thirteen points of his Constructive Programme should be pursued.

RAJAGOPALACHARI'S PROPOSAL - A PRELUDE TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN

On April 8, 1944, Rajagopalachari, a great leader from the South, proposed a scheme of compromise, apparently with the approval of Gandhi, which suggested:

1. Subject to the terms set out below as regards the construction for a free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for Independence and will cooperate with the Congress in the formation of a Provisional Interim Government for the transitional period.
2. After the termination of the war, a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated a plebiscite of all the inhabitants, held on the basis of adult franchise or other practicable franchise, shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decides in favor of the formation of a Sovereign State separate from Hindustan, such a decision shall be given effect to without prejudice to the right of the districts on the border to choose to join either state.
3. It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held.
4. In the event of separation, a mutual agreement shall be entered for safeguarding defence, commerce and communication and other essential purpose.
5. Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis.
6. These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India.

PROGRESS TOWARD THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN

There had been some apparent inconsistencies among the leaders and organizations, not excluding even the leaders of All

India Muslim League, as regards the creation of Pakistan. When explaining whether advocacy of his proposals did not run counter to his earlier statements against partition and vivisection of India, Gandhi explained that in the first place his proposals should be examined on their merits apart from his own inconsistencies and, in the second, his proposals were not inconsistent with what he had said. He then distinguished between the division of India into Pakistan and Hindustan and the vivisection of India by a permanent dismemberment of the States from the Indian Union - as was possible under Cripps' proposals. In other words, he stated that an Independent India could not be an Indian Union divested of the Indian States.

All India Muslim League earlier had passed a resolution in its meeting at Lahore in June 1940 that 'no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims, unless it is designed on the following basis principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the Constituent Units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

The Congress Working Committee meeting at Delhi in April 1942 passed a resolution that 'the Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of even larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate. Nevertheless the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union.'

Form the above quotations it is evident that the parties were changing their positions, for various reasons. The Indian National Congress was under compulsion to make a compromise with the Muslim League; the latter was changing its position from time to time realizing that the British were indeed in a way supporting its position. Gandhi and the Indian National Congress did not

have much scope to stand firmly on their original position against the partition/vivisection of India.

THE GROWTH OF THE TWO NATION THEORY

The growing insistence of the Muslim leadership, which finally stood firm on its assumed two-nation theory, forced the leadership of the Indian National Congress to seek some accommodation of the Muslim League even as it would very much like to preserve the integrity of India.

The resolution of the Working Committee which met in Delhi in April 1942, quoted above, in a way conceded the division of India into more than one political State and in a way gave 'the go-by to the unity and integrity of India' as Sitaramayya (1947:635) puts it.

The offer of Sir Stafford Cripps was already there when the Working Committee resolved in April 1942 as above: 'His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed subject only to the right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional provision, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides. With such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.'

The Indian National Congress rejected the proposal, but in its resolution of April 1942, however, conceded the rights of constituent states to secede saying that nevertheless the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. The A.I.C.C. was of the opinion that any proposal to disintegrate Indian by giving liberty to any component State or territorial Unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation would be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of different States and provinces and the country as a whole, and "the Congress therefore cannot agree to any such proposals."

In actual terms, every party in the Indian drama of independence was fast changing and updating its position, at

times in conflicting postures, based on the pressures of the times. Even the ruling British were no exception to this - from their self-government in installments position to total autonomy but for defence, finance and foreign affairs, and from which they were readying themselves to a posture of reluctance to divide the country into several autonomous or free constituent units.

In June 1945, Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for Indian reiterated the British position:

More than three years ago, we made clear that we wish India to enjoy after the war complete independence within the British Common wealth or even without it, if she so decided, on condition that the main elements in India's national life should first agree upon India's future constitution. ... if, however, no complete or logical answer to the problem (if the transfer of power without recognized and generally acceptable successors to take over) is possible today, there is no reason for not seeking some way out of the deadlock which Indians and the British alike wish to see eased, even if it cannot be completely resolved. Clearly we must try again.

The Members of the Working Committee were released on the 16th June, 1945, from Ahmednagar Fort. The Indian National Congress held its session in Meerut, in November 1945. Acharya J. B. Kripalani was the President. He delivered his Presidential inaugural address in Hindi and his concluding address in English.

The Congress declared that it stood for an Independent Sovereign Republic to signify that India's future lay wholly outside the British Empire. The Congress declared emphatically that it considered the struggle for freedom in the Princely States an essential part of the larger struggle in India. It disapproved of any schemes of merger of federation among States without reference to and without the approval of the people concerned.

The British elections were declared and the Labor Party came into power on the 10th July, 1945. Lord Pethick-Lawence took over as Secretary of State for India. The King's speech on the occasion of the opening of the new British Parliament had a paragraph on India: In accordance with the promises already made to my Indian peoples, my Government will do their utmost

to promote in conjuction with the leaders of Indian opinion, every realization of full self-government in India.

Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India, announced in September 1945, that 'it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to convene as soon as possible a Constitution making Body, and as a preliminary step they have authorized me to undertake, immediately after the elections, discussions with representatives of Legislative Assemblies in the Provinces, to ascertain whether the proposals contained in the 1942 Declaration are acceptable or whether some alternative or modified scheme is preferable.' He said that he would also ascertain the views of Indian Princely States about their participation in the Constitution-Making Body.

While these statements were not adequate, all the same, the AICC meeting in Bombay in September 1945 formed a committee for the ensuing elections. The A.I.C.C. concluded its deliberations with support to the Constructive Programme. Note that even in the midst of intense political activity and political suspense, the Indian National Congress made it a point (or rather observed it as a ritual?) that its member adhere to the success of the Constructive Programme, of which Indian language use played a crucial function and formed a major part.

Note that none of the three parties involved in the drama for Indian independence had time to devote to language issues. For one thing, in the intense political drama language issues automatically receded to the background as something which had already been settled and/or which had to be handled after obtaining independence.

LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE CONGRESS MANIFESTO FOR ELECTIONS 1945

The Congress Manifesto issued for the elections announced in 1945 was significant in many respects. In place of the Constructive Programme, of which choice and use of an Indian language as lingua franca formed a major part, Constitutional rights with regards to language, culture, script and religion were offered. There was no mention of the role of lingua franca, assuming perhaps that lingua franca would be taken up based on the earlier declarations regarding the Constructive Programme. The Manifesto, among other things, included the following: For sixty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years, its history has been the history of the Indian people, straining at the leash that has held them in bondage, every trying to unloose themselves from it. ... The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and the unceasing struggle to gain freedom. The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them.

It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and culture basis. (Italics mine.) It has stood for the rights of all those who suffers from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal of them of all barriers to equality. The Congress has envisaged a free democratic state with the fundamental rights and liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the Constitution.

This Constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under universal adult franchise. The Federation of India must be a willing union of its various parts. In order to give the maximum of freedom to the constituent units there may be a minimum list of common and essential federal subjects which will apply to all units, and a further optical list of common subjects which may be accepted by such units as desire to do so.

The Constitution shall provide for fundamental rights, among them the following:

1. Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law and morality.

2. Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practice his religion, subject to public order and morality.
3. The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected. (Italics mine.)
4. All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, or sex.
5. No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste or creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.
6. All citizens have equal rights in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of state or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.
7. Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms, in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf.
8. No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law.
9. The state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.
10. The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
11. The state shall provide for free and compulsory basic education. (Italics mine.)
12. Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

The Congress further declared, The State shall further provide all necessary safeguards for the protection and the development of the backward or suppressed elements in the population, so that they might make rapid progress and take a full and equal part in national life. In particular, the State will help in the development

of the people of the tribal areas in a manner most suited to their genius, and in the education and social and economic progress of the scheduled classes.

...Industry and agriculture, the social services and public utilities must be encouraged, modernized and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others. But all this must be done with the primary object of benefiting the masses of our people and raising their economic, cultural and spiritual level, removing unemployment, and adding to the dignity of the individual. For this purpose it will be necessary to plan and coordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to society from growing, and to have social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and distribution in land, industry and in other departments of national activity, so that free India may develop into a co-operative commonwealth. The State therefore own or control key and basic industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport, Currency and exchange, banking and insurances, must be regulated in the national interest.

Though poverty is widespread in India, it is essentially a rural problem, caused chiefly by overpressure on land and lack of other wealth-producing occupations. India, under British rule, has been progressively ruralized, many of her avenues of work and employment closed, and a vast mass of the population thrown on the land, which has undergone continuous fragmentation, till a very large number of hoardings have become uneconomic ... Planning must lead to maximum employment, indeed to the employment of every able-bodied person. Landless labourers should have opportunities of work offered to them and be absorbed in agriculture or industry.

... Industry should not be concentrated in particular provinces, so as to give a balanced economy to each province, and it should be decentralized, as far as this is possible without sacrifice or efficiency.... Adequate arrangements should be made for the

education of the masses with a view to raising them intellectually, economically, culturally and morally, and to fit them for the new forms of work and services which will open out before them………. Science, in its innumerable fields of activity, has played an every-increasing part in influencing and moulding human life and will do so even in greater measure in the future. Industrial, agricultural and cultural advance, as well as national defence, depend upon it. Scientific research is therefore a basic and essential activity of the State and should be organized and encouraged on the widest scale ...

In international affairs the Congress stands for the establishment of a world federation of free nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape, India must develop friendly relations with all nations and particularly with her neighbours. In the Far East, in South-East Asia and in Western Asia, India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations ... She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations and peoples for only on the basis of this freedom and the elimination of imperialism everywhere can world peace be established ... In these elections, petty issues do not count, nor do individuals, nor sectarian cries - only one thing counts : the freedom and will flow to our motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people. (Italics mine). Many a time the people of India have taken the pledge of independence; that pledge has yet to be redeemed, and the well-beloved cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often, still beckons to us. The time is coming when we shall redeem it in full. This election is a small test for us, a preparation for the greater things to come. Let all those who care and long for freedom and the independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence and march together to the free India of our dreams.

Note that the Congress Manifesto did not make any reference to the Constructive Programme as such, although the items of the Constructive Programme have been incorporated in several ways in the Manifesto. Thus, in one sense, the Manifesto makes a greater provision for the linguistic, religious and culture minorities including the tribals.

In another sense, the party's earlier insistence on the learning and adoption of Hindustani was conspicuous by its absence. Also absent was the role and function of Indian languages as media of instruction in the various levels of education. With the country facing division/vivisection, the Indian National Congress emphasized more on the cohesive and unifying factors of culture, religion, script and language. Also we should note that this method of keeping several things under one category of items for programmatic action, and several other things under still another category of items for future consideration has been a practice with the Indian National Congress all along. For example, the list of items in the Constructive Programme had been changing and/ or elaborated from time to time with emphasis on certain item at one time and on certain other items at another time. Likewise, the items in the Constructive Programme could be extended, or even a new list prepared and propagated. However it must be said that the Indian National Congress never failed to vouchsafe for what it had resolved in the meetings of the Working Committee and / or the A.I. C.C. It was only the relative emphasis that differed from one exigency to another, which gave an impression, not only of the on-going conflicts within the Congress, but also of a drift from and of lip-service to the items listed. It was largely a tendency to have a compromise between the Gandhi-items, Socialists and even Communists, apart from linguistic, religious and caste-based interest groups that had led to this state of affairs in the recorded proceedings of the Indian National Congress.

LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN SIMLA TALKS, 1946 AND IN CABINET MISSION PROPOSALS

In early 1946, Lord Pethic-Lawrence, the Secretary of State of India, made an announcement in the British parliament (House of Lords): The House will recall that on 19th September, 1945, on his return to Indian after discussions with the British Government, the Viceroy made a statement of policy in the course of which the outlined the positive steps to be taken immediately after the Central and Provincial elections to promote, in conjunction with leaders of Indian Opinion, early realization of full self-Government in India.

These steps include : first, preparatory discussions with elected representatives of British India and with Indian states in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing a constitution.

Second, the setting up of a Constitution-Making Body and third, the bringing into being of an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian parties.

Elections at the Centre were held at the end of last year and in some of the Provinces they are also over, and responsible Governments are in the process of formation.

In other Provinces, polling dates are spread over the next few weeks. With the approach of the end of the electoral campaign, the British Government have been considering the most fruitful method of giving effect to the programme to which I have referred.

In view of the paramount importance not to India and to the British Commonwealth but to the peace of the world of the successful outcome of the discussions with leaders of Indian opinion, the British Government have decided, with the approval of His Majesty the Kind, to send out to India a special mission of Cabinet Ministers, consisting of the Secretary of State for India (Lord Pethick-Lawrence), the President of the Board of Trade (Sir Stafford Cripps) and the First Lord of Admiralty (Mr. A.V.Alexander), to act in association with the Viceroy in this matter.

This decision has the full concurrence of Lord Wavell.

The Cabinet Mission, headed by Lord Pethic-Lawrence, arrived in India on 23rd March, 1946, and stayed in India for about three months. The Cabinet Mission began its work with a series of interviews with the leaders of communal and political parties. By 27th April, 1946, Lord Pethic-Lawrence wrote a letter to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the President of the Indian National Congress, giving the Cabinet Mission's proposals as follows:

A Union Government dealing with the following subjects: Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications.

There shall be two groups of Provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu Provinces and the other of the

predominantly Muslim Provinces, dealing with all other subjects dealt with in common. The Provincial Governments will deal with all other subjects and will have all the residuary sovereign rights.

It is contemplated that the Indian States will take their appropriate place in this structure on terms to be negotiated with them.

I would point out that we do not think it either necessary or desirable further to elaborate these principles al all other matters could be dealt with in the course of the negotiations.

Lord Pethic-Lawrence in his letter of 27th April, 1946 stated that he had been asked to invite the Muslim League to send four negotiators to meet the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy together with a similar number from the Congress Working Committee with a view to discussing the possibility of agreement on the scheme, which we have quoted above.

The President of the Indian National Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, wrote back in his letter of 28th April, 1946 assuring the Secretary of State for India and Leader of the Cabinet Mission, Lord Pethic-Lawrence, that the Congress had always been willing to discuss fully any matters concerning the future of India with the representatives of the Muslim League or any other organization, but desired some amplification and elucidation of the "fundamental principles" given in Lord Peghic-Lawrence's letter:

As you are aware, we have envisaged a Federal Union of autonomous units, Such a Federal Union must of necessity deal with certain essential subjects of which defence and its allied subjects are the most important. It must be organic and must have both an executive and legislative machinery as well as the finance relating to these subjects and the power to raise revenues for these purposes in its own right. Without these functions and powers it would be weak and disjointed and defence and progress in general would suffer.

Thus among the common subjects in addition to Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications there should be Currency, Customs, Tariffs and such other subjects as may be found on close scrutiny to be intimately allied to them.

Your reference to two groups of provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu Provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim Provinces, is not clear. The only predominantly Muslim Provinces are the North West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchisten. Bengal and Punjab have a bare Muslim majority. We consider it wrong to form groups of Provinces under the Federal Union and more so on religious or communal basis. It also appears that you leave no choice to a Province in the matter of joining or not joining a group. It is by no means certain that a Province as constituted would be wholly wrong to compel a Province to function against its own wish. While we agree to the Provinces having full powers in regard to all remaining subjects as well as the residuary powers, we have also stated that it should be open to any Province to exercise its option to have more subjects with the Federal Union. Any sub federation within the Federal Union would weaken the Federal Centre and would be otherwise wrong. We do not, therefore, favour any such development.

Regarding the Indian States we should like to make it clear that we can consider it essential that they should be parts of the Federal Union in regard to the Common subjects mentioned above. The manner of their coming into the Union can be considered fully later.

You have referred to certain "fundamental principles" but there is no mention of the basis issue before us, that is, Indian Independence and the consequent withdrawal of the British army from India It is only on this basis that we can discuss the future of India, or any interim arrangement.

Mr. M.A. Jinnah, President of the All India Muslim League reiterated the League's position by enclosing a copy of the resolution passed by the All India Muslim League Legislators' Convention in April 1946. This resolution called for constituting a sovereign independent State comprising Bengal and Assam in the North-East zone and the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan in the North-West zone. It further called for two separate constitution-making bodies to be set up by peoples of Pakistan and Hindustan for the purpose of framing their respective constitutions. It asked for provisions assuring safeguard for all the minorities in Pakistan and Hindustan.

During the Simla talks, in May, 1946, the Cabinet Mission suggested the following points for agreement between the representatives of Congress and the Muslim League :

1. There shall be an All-India Union Government and Legislature dealing with Foreign Affairs, Defence, Communications, Fundamental Rights (italics ours) and having the necessary powers to obtain for itself the finances it requires for these subjects.
2. All the remaining powers shall vest in the Provinces.
3. Groups of Provinces may be formed and such groups may determine the Provincial subjects which they desire to take in common.
4. The groups may set up their own Executives and Legislatures.
5. The Legislature of the Union shall be composed of equal proportions from the Hindu-majority Provinces whether or not these or any of them have formed themselves into groups together with representatives of the States.
6. The Government of the Union shall be constituted in the same proportion as the Legislature.
7. The constitutions of the Union and the groups (if any) shall contain a provision whereby any province can by a majority vote of its legislative assembly call for a reconstruction of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of 10 years and at 10 yearly intervals thereafter. 'For the purpose of such reconsideration a body shall be constituted on the same basis as the original Constituent Assembly and with the same provisions as to voting and shall have power to amend the construction in any way decided upon.'
8. The constitution - making machinery to arrive at a constitution on the above basis shall be as follows:
   A. Representatives shall be elected from each Provincial Assembly in proportion to the strengths of the various parties in that assembly on the basis of 1/10 of their numbers.

B. Representatives shall be invited from the States on the basis of their populations in proportion to the representation from British India.

C. The Constituent Assembly so formed shall meet at the earliest date possible in New Delhi.

D. After its preliminary meeting at which the general order of business will be settled it will divide into three sections, one section representing the Hindi-majority Provinces, one section representing the Muslim-majority Provinces and one section representing the States.

E. The first two sections will then meet separately to decide the Provincial constitutions for their group and if they wish, a group constitution.

F. When these have been settled it will be open to any Province to decide to opt out of its original group and into the other group or to remain outside any group.

G. Thereafter the three bodies will meet together to settle the constitution for the Union on the lines agreed in paragraphs 1 to 7 above.

H. No major points in the Union constitution which effects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed by the Assembly unless a majority of both the two major communities vote in its favour.

9. The Viceroy shall forthwith call together the above constitution-making machinery which shall be governed by the provisions stated in paragraph 8 above.

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